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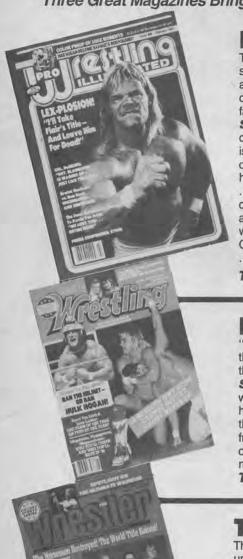
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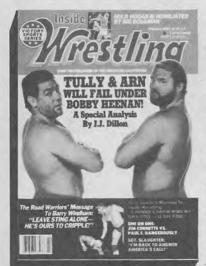
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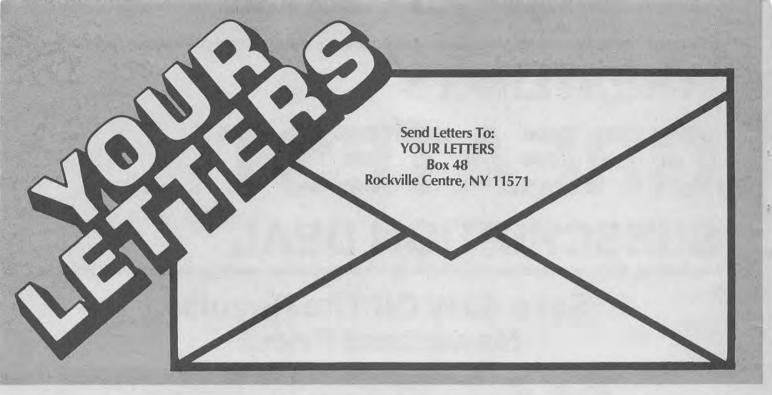
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ROAD WARRIORS: PRO ...

It's good to see that The Road Warriors have finally realized what's really important in wrestling: the championship belts. And now that Animal and Hawk have them, they're never going to give them up.

After reading the story in the February 1989 issue of *The Wrestler* ("The Road Warriors: 'Sting, Dusty, & The Fans Can Go To Hell!' "), I'm pretty sure the Warriors weren't talking about all their fans; they just meant those fans that turned on them just because they turned "bad."

But I have news for these fans, the Warriors didn't turn bad. They've always been that way. They're a team that goes after what they want—and gets it.

I predict that the Warriors will reign for a long time in the NWA. Nobody's tougher, nobody's bigger, and nobody can beat them.

> JOHN LESLIE Savannah, GA

... AND CON

The Road Warriors must want all the fans to go to hell so they can meet them there. After what they did to Sting and Dusty Rhodes, there's no doubt that's exactly where they're going.



The Road Warriors are back to their old, evil ways, to the delight of reader John Leslie and the dismay of reader Leslie Schenk.

I've never been a Road Warriors fan, simply because I knew what these guys are all about. I used to watch them in the AWA, and they were the meanest men I've ever seen. They also love to cheat. When was the last time they won a match without attacking their opponents before the bell?

If they think they can terrorize the fans by beating up on Sting and Dusty, let them, but I know that when it gets down to a fair two-on-two situation, Hawk and Animal will be right back where they started: without the belts.

LESLIE SCHENK Worcester, MA

THE ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD

Is professional wrestling becoming a shortcut to Hollywood stardom? It seems so. Ever since Hulk Hogan started making guest appearances on shows such as *The A-Team*, many of the pros have made acting a second career.

I recently had the pleasure of seeing Roddy Piper's film *They Live*. It



Roddy Piper, who recently starred in the movie *They Live*, is enjoying a profitable movie career that will, in Patti LaRue's opinion, make him a superstar.

was the perfect vehicle for Roddy's talent. I predict superstardom for him in the coming years. Also, the wrestling sitcom *Learning The Ropes* has proven itself in the eyes of the fans.

Personally, I love seeing my favorite wrestlers in different shows. I just hope the neon lights of Hollywood don't steal all of them away from the sport I love so much.

PATTIE LaRUE Augusta, AK

THE ULTIMATE SHOWDOWN

The story in your February 1989 issue of *The Wrestler* about Hulk Hogan and The Ultimate Warrior ("It's Coming! An Ultimate Warrior-Hulk Hogan Showdown!") was true to its word. I would not be surprised if these two met for the I-C belt at WrestleMania V. I like both Hogan and the Warrior a lot, but I don't think Hogan likes to share the spotlight with anybody else. I won't be surprised if Hogan turns bad.

MARC PECORARO Fair Lawn, NJ



Andre the Giant chokes Randy Savage during one of the "Macho Man's" more difficult WWF World title defenses. Reader Craig Williamson disagrees with a recent story that suggests Hulk Hogan should assist Savage in such encounters.

IN DEFENSE OF HOGAN

In reference to the article in your January 1989 issue ("When Andre Savaged The Macho Man—Where Was Hulk?"), I was very shocked and taken aback at your criticism of Hogan not coming to the assistance of Randy Savage in his match against Andre the Giant. Why should he have? Randy Savage is WWF World champion, and with that he should be able to handle the responsibilities that come with the title—including taking on Andre.

It seems to me that, with this article, you have proven yourself to be very hypocritical. Why do you condemn Hogan for not helping Savage and, at the same time, condemn Ric Flair for requiring the help of his fellow Horsemen? Hogan saved Savage from The Hart Foundation, The Honky Tonk Man, Ted DiBiase, Virgil,

and Andre, and he practically handed Savage the belt at WrestleMania IV.

Hogan has done everything possible for Savage, and it's time for Savage to get on with his title reign without having to depend on the "Hulkster." Your magazine should recognize this. Besides, where was Savage after DiBiase hit Hogan with a chair at WrestleMania IV? And where was Savage on February 5, 1988, in Indianapolis? Wasn't Savage fighting The Honky Tonk Man on the same card?

CRAIG WILLIAMSON Nova Scotia

JUST COINCIDENCE?

Thanks for the fine interview with Eddie Gilbert in the February 1989 issue of *The Wrestler* ("Q & A"). Isn't it remarkable how much Gilbert has (Continued on page 44)



IS FACE COVERED with sweat after suffering a controversial pinfall loss to NWA World champ **Ric Flair** at Starrcade '88, **Lex Luger** bitterly told reporters that he's "never gotten a clean shot at Flair and probably never will."

"What can I say?" Luger said quietly. "I asked for a no-disqualification match, got it, and Flair still found a way out. Last summer, I had him in that backbreaker and the ref said I was bleeding. Now this. Either somebody's protecting Flair, or he's the luckiest man in the world."

The December 26 showdown in Norfolk, Virginia, was probably the most anticipated—and, for Luger, the most disappointing—match of Luger's brilliant four-year career. For months, Luger begged NWA officials for a match against Flair in which a disqualification would count the same as a pin. When Flair agreed to the terms, Luger guaranteed victory. But it was not to be.

Luger's best chance to win came late in the match when Flair whacked his legs with a chair. If Flair had been disqualified, Luger would have been awarded the belt, but referee **Tommy Young**



Lex Luger hiptosses NWA World champion Ric Flair during the Starrcade '88 main event. Flair pinned Luger in that bout, but he did so using the ropes for leverage.

didn't see the infraction. Finally, with 31 minutes expired, Luger caught Flair in a backbreaker. But Luger toppled to the mat when his knee gave out. Flair, illegally using the ropes for leverage, pinned Luger for the victory.

"The chair thing was ridiculous," Luger said. "I can't see how Young didn't see it, unless he didn't want to see it. Then, to add insult to injury, what he did with the chair caused my knee to give (Continued on page 48)

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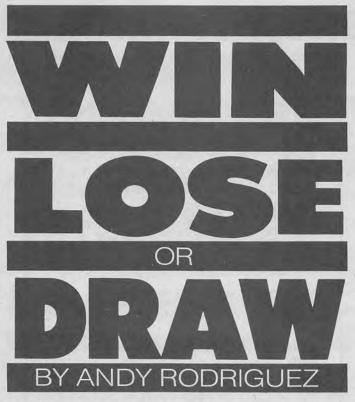
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VERYONE HERE =is verv excited about what will happen in wrestling now that Ted Turner has bought controlling interest in the NWA. Finally, they say, the NWA will be able to compete with the WWF equally. Vince McMahon's domination of the sport will end. they claim, as Turner pours his considerable resources into the game. But as excited as everyone else is, I don't think the big change is going to happen.

The WWF has been the number-one organization in wrestling for

the past five years. Admittedly, during most of that time the quality of wrestling in the NWA and elsewhere has been superior. Still, the WWF has more fans, makes more money, and garners more attention outside the sport than any other organization. When



someone who doesn't follow wrestling finds out I work for a wrestling magazine, they usually ask about Hulk Hogan and Randy Savage. rarely about Rhodes or Jerry Lawler.

If a national talk-show host like Regis Philbin wants a wrestler on

his program, more often than not it's going to be a WWF wrestler. If Entertainment **Tonight** does a feature on wrestling, don't expect to see Kerry Von Erich or Ric Flair; instead, look for George "The Animal" Steele or The Tonk Honky Man. When television producers think wrestling, they think WWF. It's that simple.

Of course there are exceptions. Most notably, George Michael's Sports Machine on the NBC network provides regular coverage of all the major federations. But Michaels is a big

wrestling fan; he knows what's going on.

Under McMahon, the WWF has consistently drawn tremendous crowds. Toronto, 1986: 70,000. Detroit, 1987: 93,000. Milwaukee, 1988: 27,000. Those numbers are testament to the federation's continuing popularity. In its current state, the NWA can't dream of drawing such crowds.

And those crowds don't just materialize out of thin air. The WWF's TV programs are seen in more markets than any other wrestling show. If more fans follow the feuds on TV, it naturally follows that more fans will come out to the arenas.

... or stay home and watch the big matches on pay-per-view TV, another area where the WWF dominates. Pay-per-view cards like WrestleMania IV and the Survivor Series have garnered more than the NWA's viewers Starrcade, or SuperClash III, the joint effort of the AWA, World Class, CWA, and CWF.

In addition, the technical quality (Continued on page 52)



Under Vince McMahon, the WWF has grown to heights that have been thus far unreachable by other wrestling organizations. Andy Rodriguez thinks it will remain that way for some time to come.



GO WITH THE LEADER!

Hogan Topples Andre At WrestleMania III

KOLOFF TAKES AMA AT T

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SOME RANDOM THOUGHTS on some random events that took place as 1988 drew to a close:

Nikita Koloff leaves the NWA: This is truly a major story. The massive Russian, seemingly at the top of his game, left the NWA when his feud against Paul Jones' Russian Assassins was beginning to heat up. Jones has been taking the credit for Koloff's departure, but you can rest assured that his Assassins

had absolutely nothing to do with it.

It's unclear exactly why Koloff left the federation, but what is known is that the NWA talent roster has been severely depleted recently with the departure of Tully Blanchard and Arn Anderson, The Sheepherders (now known as The Bushwackers in the WWF), Ron Garvin, Jimmy Garvin, and Brad Armstrong. The loss of Koloff may be the severest blow of them all—particularly to Ivan Koloff. Uncle Ivan will likely find out that the aging Junkyard Dog is a pretty poor replacement for his nephew, who established himself as one of the great competitors of the '80s.

Nikita Koloff

Harley Race returns: This item makes this columnist look pretty stupid, considering I practically eulogized Race on his "retirement" in the November 1988 issue. But who expected to see Race back in a wrestling ring again? He reportedly underwent more than seven hours of abdominal surgery last spring, making this return pretty close to a miracle.

Race continues to show the same kind of courage that once made him a seventime NWA champion. Upon his return, Race immediately issued a challenge to King Haku. He wants to be "king" again. Haku is a talented wrestler, but if Race is even 70 percent of what he once was, it should be good enough to return him to his throne. But why are these full-grown men concerned with a silly crown instead of qunning for titles?

Don Muraco wins the North American title: The NWA isn't the only major federation to lose some talent. In November, a hungry Don Muraco left the WWF in quest of a title. After just a few weeks in the Stampede area, he captured the North American championship from massive Makhan Singh on December 9.

Singh, a rugged 380-pounder, had been on a reign of terror throughout the Stampede area since May, when he defeated Owen Hart for the title. Thankfully, Muraco has ended Singh's controversial title reign, but he's not the only WWF refugee to succeed in Stampede: The British Bulldogs won the International tag team title two days earlier. To me, this proves that Muraco, Davey Boy Smith, and The Dynamite Kid are still exciting, championship-caliber wrestlers who were simply buried in McMahonland. And speaking of excitement . . .

The ACW is hot! ACW stands for Atlantic Coast Wrestling, a new federation that's promoting cards in the Carolinas, Georgia, and surrounding areas. This promotion has imported stars like The Rock 'n' Roll Express, Jimmy Garvin, Mitch Snow, Buddy Landell, Nelson Royal, Rick Gibson, and many others. They've also got a terrific TV program hosted by Rick Stuart, one of the best new voices in the sport. Is this the infancy of wrestling's next major group?

Best bets for 1989: Dan Spivey rejuvenated his career in the WWC during 1988, and he looks like he's ready to become a major star. Heidi Lee Morgan is the ICW champion, and she's as talented as any woman in wrestling. Other impressive youngsters to watch for are Samoan Kokina, T.C. Reynolds, and Lance Idol.

I almost don't want to mention Sid Vicious, the new CWA champion, who's having the same kind of impact in Memphis that The Road Warriors had in Georgia back in 1983. Vicious is a perfectly proportioned 300-pounder who's as strong as Hulk Hogan and as agile as Rick Morton. He's also living up to his name, as he broke the neck of 17-year-old Jamie Dundee a couple of months back. This man is not just impressive—he's downright *frightening*.

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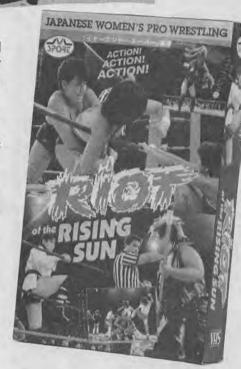
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- Masked You & Kaoru "Dump" Matsumoto vs. Lioness Asuka & Chigusa Nagayo-"The Crush Girls"
- "Jaguar" Rimi Yokota vs. Las Galactia
- "Jaquar" Rimi Yokota vs. "Devil"

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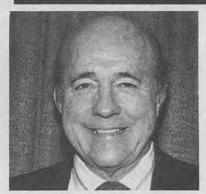
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Each issue, The Wrestler will praise the noteworthy and damn those who violate the honor of wrestling. The praiseworthy receive a Thumbs Up, the disgraceful are marked with a Thumbs Down. Here is this month's roll of honor and shame.



Thumbs Up to Don Muraco. Lost in the WWF shuffle for several years, this former Intercontinental champ finally decided to do something about it. He left the WWF and headed north for Calgary and the Stampede area. And wouldn't you know it—Muraco defeated Makhan Singh for the North American title almost immediately upon his arrival! Singh, of course, had been nothing but a black mark on the championship since winning it from Owen Hart last year. Muraco did the title and the Stampede fans a great service by disposing of the evil Singh.



Thumbs Up to Verne Gagne. When the AWA first announced it was combining with World Class, the CWA, and the CWF to produce a pay-per-view show, people snickered. But Gagne, the main promoter of the event, proved the skeptics wrong with an entertaining and action-packed show. Top stars from around the country were on hand, and every wrestler was at the top of his game. By early indications, the show was a financial success, too. Current plans are for another PPV show in late winter or early spring. This time, the skeptics will be silent.



Thumbs Up to Ric Flair. The NWA World champion's victory over Lex Luger at Starrcade '88 was certainly controversial, but just the fact that Flair could get Luger into a pinning position proves he still has a lot left. Most people felt Luger was too strong and too determined for Flair, but so far that hasn't been the case. If anything, Flair's determination overcomes his other shortcomings, and he's certainly an outstanding scientific wrestler. The "Nature Boy" has held the NWA World title for most of this decade, and from all appearances he'll hold it well into the next decade.



Thumbs Up to Tatsumi Fujinami. An unusual display of sportsmanship by the IWGP champ cost him the World Class belt, but earned him plenty of respect from Kerry Von Erich. Kerry was on a tour of Japan to defend the World Class title and, on December 9 in Tokyo, lost via countout to Fujinami. According to World Class rules, the title changes hands on a countout, but Fujinami refused to accept the victory. "I'll only take the belt if I win by a pin," he said. How ironic that Von Erich lost the belt to an unscrupulous Jerry Lawler just four nights later.

Thumbs Down



Thumbs Down to Randy Savage. Experience tells us that a champion has significant control over whom he wrestles. For example, a champ can decide that a potential challenger is not up to par and not wrestle him. That's exactly how Savage, the WWF World champion, should have dealt with Rick Rude. Although Rude has a gigantic ego, his won-lost record since arriving in the WWF is nothing to be proud of. He has almost no shot at beating Savage. Doesn't Savage know this? Or is he simply trying to pad his championship record? If so, that's nothing to be proud of, either.



Thumbs Down to Jerry Lawler. Is there any doubt Lawler used a foreign object against Kerry Von Erich during the AWA-World Class title-unification bout at SuperClash III? We think not. Lawler clearly dipped into his trunks, pulled something out, and slugged Von Erich with a closed fist. This showed total disregard for the rulebook. Then, to add insult to injury, referee Marty Miller later stopped the match and awarded it to Lawler because Kerry was bleeding too badly! But why was Kerry bleeding? Because Lawler hit him with a foreign object! What a sham!



Thumbs Down to Larry Zbyszko. What has happened to the Western States title Zbyszko won on January 24, 1988, from Barry Windham? How can it be that Zbyszko won the belt from Windham, never lost it, yet lost so much ground on him? Windham, of course, is now the proud U.S. champ. He defends the belt regularly against top contenders. Zbyszko, meanwhile, has fallen out of sight. He wrestled only once during Battlestarr week, and was nowhere to be found at the Clash of the Champions. Zbyszko has managed to make the Western States title meaningless. He should be stripped of the belt.



Thumbs Down to Bam Bam Bigelow. Bad news for Bam Bam. After finally getting established in the NWA and landing a series of matches for Windham's U.S. title, Bigelow did exactly what he shouldn't have: He took off on a five-week tour of Japan. Once again, Bigelow is showing that he can't stay in one place for very long. He left the CWA, he left World Class, he left the CWA again, then he left the WWF for the NWA. Now he's gone from the NWA! Although he's not gone for good, we wonder if Bigelow will get those matches against Windham when he returns. This was a drastic career error.

CORRESPONDENTS

REPORTS

Buffalo, NY (Correspondents—Paul McGee, Mike Watters, & Chris Jaskowiak): In their Buffalo debut with the WWF, Tully Blanchard and Arn Anderson—The Brain Busters—battled Paul Roma and Jim Powers—The Young Stallions.

The bout began cleanly as Blanchard and Roma exchanged armlocks, bodyslams, and



Tully Blanchard grabs the rope to force Paul Roma to release his toehold. Blanchard and Arn Anderson's experience was too much for The Young Stallions.

suplexes. Tully eyeraked Roma after the referee had forced a break. This angered Roma, who punched and dropkicked Blanchard.

The action see-sawed. It was apparent that Tully and Arn were at a disadvantage in terms of both speed and strength. But later in the bout, their skill and experience as former NWA World tag team champions would become extremely useful in forcing the Stallions to make mistakes.

The turning point came when Powers kicked out of an Anderson pinfall attempt. He fought his way to his feet, knocking Arn through the ropes. From the floor, Anderson goaded Powers into a fight at ringside. Blanchard was then able to attack Powers from behind.

Tully and Arn slammed Powers' head into the ringpost and dumped him on the apron. Blanchard came back into the ring and took a beating from Roma, then distracted the referee while Anderson worked on Powers, ramming his leg into the ringpost several times.

Arn tagged back in and applied several grapevine leglocks and one-legged Boston crabs on Powers. Anderson tagged out and Blanchard weakened the leg further, then tried to clamp on a figure-four leglock. When the painful move was half-applied, Powers punched Blanchard and went on the attack.

Powers finally tagged Roma, who mounted a brief rally with a series of flying dropkicks and a headscissors. Roma then boomeranged himself off the ropes at Arn, who promptly delivered a spinecrusher. Tully tagged in and mounted the top rope as Anderson held Roma in place. Blanchard leaped and executed a sunset flip. As Roma fell back, Arn hit him with a bone-snapping clothesline. Roma was easily pinned.

In other bouts: Ultimate Warrior beat The Honky Tonk Man ... Bad News Brown beat Ken Patera ... Big Bossman beat Hill-billy Jim ... Blue Blazer defeated Danny Davis ... Rockin' Robin defeated Sherri Martel ... Hercules thrashed Virgil ... Jake Roberts annihilated Rick Rude.

Edmonton, Alberta (Correspondent—Scott Wilde): Don "The Rock" Muraco challenged Makhan Singh for the Stampede North American title. Muraco took control early by working on the champion's leg with a series of stepover_toeholds and leg pulls.

The champion turned the tide by ramming "The Rock's" head (Continued on page 62)

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- Q: "My question is for Bob Backlund: You have always been my favorite wrestler. When are you going to return to wrestling?"—Kevin Corbett, Staten Island, NY
- A: "I'm going to Japan for a match against one of their big stars, Nobuhiko Takada," Backlund said. "After that, I'm taking a wait-and-see attitude. I still feel I'm good enough to wrestle with the best. Some people don't know what to make of me, because I wrestle a clean, scientific style, which is rare nowadays. But I still think there's a place in the sportand in the hearts of the fans-for that kind of wrestling. Like I said, let's wait and see. You never know."

Q: "My question is for Terry Gordy: In my opinion, you're the only real 'Bamm Bamm.' Do you plan to go to the NWA and annihilate that lummox Bam Bam Bigelow and his



This is the monthly feature that answers ALL your most important questions about the mat sport, the stars, and the feuds. Send us your most perplexing queries and we'll have them answered for you by the world's finest grapplers and most insightful mat reporters. Address your questions to: YOU ASKED US, c/o THE WRESTLER, P.O. Box 48, Rockville Centre, NY 11571.



Terry "Bamm Bamm" Gordy chinlocks Bam Bam Bigelow during their "Battle Of The Bam Bams." Gordy says he's done much more than Bigelow to earn the name.

- manager Oliver Humperdink?"— Carlie Gill, Anchorage, AK
- A: "Me and Bigelow had a real tough match up in Chicago awhile back." Gordy said. "We were kinda trvin' to settle who the real 'Bamm Bamm' is. Well, everybody knows that I had that name long before Bigelow broke into the sport. It don't matter if you spell it with one 'M' or two, it's about what you do with your fists: bamm. bamm on your opponent's head! I think I've proved I deserve that name. Ask Michael Haves, he'll tell you. Even my old partner Buddy Roberts, who I don't get along with real well right now, he'd admit that I'm the meanest dude he's ever had the displeasure of facing in the ring. Bigelow's gonna have to learn it the hard way, too."
- Q: "My question is for Sting: If Lex Luger wins the NWA World title before you do, are you going to go after him?"—Dimitre Nacheff, Blackfoot, ID
- A: "Boy, that's a tough one," Sting replied. "On the one hand, there isn't anything in the world I want more than the NWA World title. It's the most prestigious belt on earth. On the other hand, Lex has been a great friend and an awesome tag team partner. He was right there to help when The Road Warriors double-crossed Here's what I'd do: I'd ask Lex for a strictly scientific match. If he said no, fine, I'd accept that. And if the match did come off, I hope we'd both be intelligent enough to stick to wrestling and not lose our tempers and try to destroy each other. If anybody's gonna get destroyed, it's Ric Flair. That's the goal Lex and I share: Flair's complete humiliation. That would be as sweet as any title."
- Q: "I have a question for my favorite wrestling journalist, David Rosenbaum: How did you get involved in wrestling journalism, and how (Continued on page 63)

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July 1984/Stories include: Rich, Billy Jack, Valiant, Von Erich.

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LOU PEREZ

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In fact, the similarities don't end there. Lou is currently wrestling in the Florida Championship area; Al wrestled in Florida before gaining national prominence in World Class and the NWA. The similarities in style and approach are so great, in fact, that several lines in "Introducing Al Perez" from the February 1984 Wrestler might also apply to Lou:

For one so young, it seems remarkable that he can master maneuvers so difficult and complex. Though he still makes the mistakes of youth, he studiously continues to improve. It's no surprise that most people peg Perez as a superstar of the future, a mandestined to be champion.

There is a difference, however. Lou is a fan favorite while Al is one of the most hated rulebreakers in the NWA. But wait—Al Perez also started his career as a fan favorite. In fact, that very (Continued on page 58)

Currently wrestling in the Florida Championship area, Lou Perez shows as much promise as his older brother Al did in his rookie year. However, Lou has no intention of becoming a rulebreaker like Al—at least not yet.

Lou Perez has everything his older brother Al Perez has: good looks, an outstanding physique, classic training, and a magnificent scientific repertoire. Now he's one of the most popular young stars in Florida—just like Al once was!

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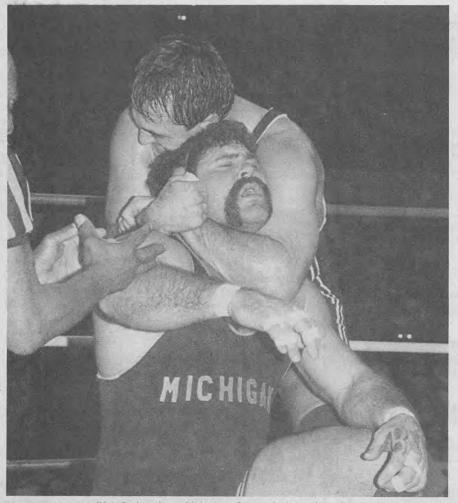
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Answer" forum with an important
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as they answer the questions uppermost in
the fans' minds



Mike Rotundo puts Rick Steiner in a chinlock at Starrcade '88, where Rotundo lost the NWA TV title to his former Varsity Club partner. Rotundo is still bitter.

Q: First of all, Mike, it's pretty . . .

- A: Pretty what, Peters? Go on, spit it out, jump all over me! It's bad enough that Steiner is walking around with my TV title belt around his worthless waist, but now I've gotta put up with the media jumping down my throat. Well, I'm expecting it, so go ahead and rub it in, four eyes.
- Q: Hey, calm down! I wasn't trying to rub anything in, Mike, I was just going to comment on how remarkable it was that you held the TV title for 11 months before you were defeated by Steiner. That's quite an enviable record.
- A: Bah! Who cares how long I held that title if I don't hold it now? And to lose to the most untalented wrestler in North America doesn't make things any easier for me.
- Q: The most untalented wrestler in North America? *Rick Steiner*? I don't think you've been watching the same man I have.
- A: Sure I have. Steiner is nothing more than a big dumb jock, a dismally untalented little goat tick. He never amounted to a damn thing until his career came under the guidance of me and Kevin Sullivan. For months and months we worked hard with that big ape, teaching him maneuvers and strategies. We deprived ourselves of free time with our families to care for him, and then he just up and quits The Varsity Club for no reason, the ungrateful bum.



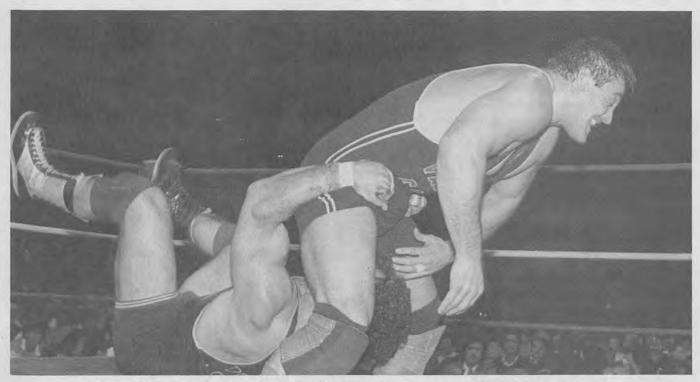
MIKE ROTUNDO

FINALLY, RICK STEINER wised up. After an unfathomable amount of mental and physical abuse, Steiner decided to cast aside the scurrilous influence of The Varsity Club.

And Mike Rotundo, his former tag team partner, was glad to be rid of him. Without Steiner, he felt, the spotlight was back where it belonged—on himself. After all, Rotundo was the only Varsity Club member with a major NWA title, the TV championship.

It didn't stay that way for long, however. Steiner, long insulted and downgraded by both Rotundo and Club leader Kevin Sullivan, shocked the wrestling world by defeating Rotundo for the TV title at Starrcade '88 on December 26 in Norfolk, Virginia. On that same card, the other Varsity Club members, Sullivan and Steve Williams, won the U.S. tag team title from The Fantastics. Suddenly, Rotundo was the only Varsity Club member without a title. It's a situation the former Syracuse University star never thought possible.

Rotundo, who has become more than a bit unbalanced by the loss, has vowed revenge on Steiner. Managing Editor Craig Peters was in Norfolk a few days after the title loss to speak to Rotundo about one of the most startling upsets of his career.



Rotundo resists Steiner's attempt to pin him with a sunset flip. He claims he and Kevin Sullivan taught Steiner everything he knows about wrestling. Rotundo is now the only member of The Varsity Club without a belt; at Starrcade, Sullivan and Steve Williams won the U.S. tag team title from The Fantastics.

Q: For no reason? I've heard with my own ears the verbal abuse Steiner used to take! You and Sullivan used to ride him unmercifully! There were also those awful rumors of physical abuse . . .

A: Totally unfounded!

Q: ... and assorted other tortures.

And how about the time that you,
Sullivan, and Williams ganged up
on him? He had a perfect right to
get away from that kind of an unhealthy environment.

A: Unhealthy? How can being an instant champion be unhealthy? The

day he joined the Club, I handed him my Florida title on a silver platter. Nobody ever seems to talk about that. Nobody talks about all the good Kevin and I did for him, either. Anything he's earned he owes to me. His nickname, "Dogfaced Gremlin," right? I gave that to him. His belly-to-back suplex? It was me who taught that to him. In a way, I blame myself for losing the TV belt to that jerk. I taught the gorilla everything he knows.

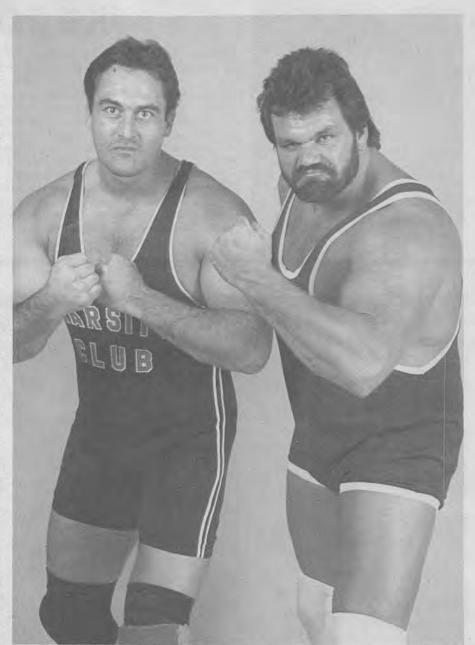
Q: At least you can take solace in the fact that Sullivan and Steve Wil-

liams won the U.S. belts from The Fantastics at Starrcade.

A: That's true. Adding "Dr. Death" to The Varsity Club more than makes up for the loss of Steiner, that idiot. Steve is big, tough, and mean, and it was a pleasure to watch him mash the faces of Tommy Rogers and Bobby Fulton into the mat. Winning that title also proves that Kevin is far from washed up as a wrestler. We'd heard all the talk that he was getting old, that he should hang it up. But now he's a champion again,

and I think that should shut up all the doomsayers out there.

- Q: That's not likely, considering the way Sullivan and Williams won the title. Then Williams tried to end your match against Steiner by ringing the bell too soon! That kind of activity is nothing to be proud about.
- A: Speak for yourself, Peters. It doesn't matter how you win, as long as you bring home the gold. That's the biggest thing Sullivan has taught me since I joined the Club. For years, I wasted my career listening to the cheers of the fans. Now I'm making more money than ever before. That's why getting back that TV belt is so important, because champions make more money than ex-champions. Believe me, I'm not gonna stay the only chicken in Kevin's coop that isn't laying golden eggs.
- Q: I've never heard it explained quite that way before. And you . . . Mike, you . . . are you okay? I've never seen you sweat like this during an interview. You're really on edge, like you're . . .
- A: Hey, shut up! I think I've got the right to be a little upset. That Steiner has been a boil on my neck for long enough now. Do you remember the way he used to conduct himself during our interviews? I'd be trying to make an important point, and he'd be either staring into space or making rabbit ears behind my head. Or, he'd start leading the crowd in anti-Syracuse chants. Or he'd make the crowd call me "Retardo!"
- Q: That's true. That had to be pretty embarrassing (laughs).
- A: Hey, that's not funny! Steiner was making me lose my concentration during crucial matches. I could have been a tag team champion long ago if it wasn't for that fool. Finally, Kevin, Steve, and I decided enough was enough. We weren't gonna let him sabotage our plans any longer.
- Q: I remember that day. It was November 9 in Greenwood, South



Rotundo says Williams has been a much better partner than Steiner ever was, but his remarks are tainted with jealousy. The former Syracuse University standout vows to end Steiner's TV title reign as quickly as possible.

Carolina, right?

- A: You bet. The match was supposed to be Steiner and me against The Fantastics for the U.S. title, but Kevin decided to team me with Williams at the last minute. Good move. Steiner can't take being left out, so he starts leading the crowd against me, which really made Kevin angry. Finally, I had Rogers up in a suplex, and Steiner grabbed my leg and tripped me-his own partner! We had no choice but to beat the packings out of him and leave him laying there. We were through with him right then and there.
- Q: Not *quite* through. He vowed to get revenge, and I think he did a terrific job in defeating you for the TV title. Plus, he has the fans on his side in incredible numbers. He may be the most popular wrestler in the NWA now.
- A: Big deal! Do you see what he's been up to lately? He keeps talking to his "friend" of his, Alex, who is nothing but a drawing on his hand. He's also been bringing some big, old garbage-eating dog to ringside with him. You call that a wrestler? You call that a champion? I'm gonna make him sorry he ever took the name of Syracuse Univer-

sity in vain. I'm gonna make him sorry he ever heard of Mike Rotundo.

Q: How are you going to do that?

- A: Simple. I'm gonna take that title away from him the first time I get the chance. But this time, I'm gonna do more than that. I'm gonna rip that gear off his head and strangle him with it. I'm gonna break his arms so he can't give high-fives to the fans anymore. I'm gonna crack his kneecaps so he can never deliver suplexes again. And I'm gonna cripple him so bad he'll never get in a wrestling ring ever again. Steiner's success is my fault, so it's up to me to right the wrong that I've done.
- Q: I'm sure Steiner will have something to say about that. He's a new man since becoming so popular. He's also a better wrestler than you give him credit for being. Maybe it's you that's taking the wrong road. Maybe you should quit The Varsity Club and make up with Steiner.
- A: What? You're as crazy as Steiner! The only way I'll have anything to do with Steiner is if they call me into the coroner's office to identify the body after I kill him. He's an embarrassment to all truly great collegiate athletes such as myself, Williams, and Sullivan. The Varsity Club stands for everything excellent about higher education. Steiner is more like an advertisement for dropouts. He's got to be destroyed, and I'm just the guy to do it.
- Q: I never thought I'd see the great Mike Rotundo become so unbalanced. It appears we may never again see the scientific star who thrilled fans all over the world. You're not only a rulebreaker—you're downright vicious!
- A: Aw, sticks and stones, Peters. Who cares what you think, anyway? All I care about is getting my title back and ripping Steiner apart. I'm not gonna be happy until I've done it. Then The Varsity Club will completely dominate the NWA!

Wiesting:

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From time to time, The Wrestler will shine its spotlight on an outstanding wrestler, manager, or tag team. These are unforgettable highlights of the sport's greatest stars, compiled by the largest staff of editors and photographers in wrestling journalism

THE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS

THEIR VIOLENT BATTLES with Paul E. Dangerously's Midnight Express should not obscure the fact that Stan Lane and Bobby Eaton—Jim Cornette's Midnight Express—are an outstanding tag team.

Things looked bleak for Cornette in March 1987, when he fired Dennis Condrey because he believed Condrey wasn't doing enough to help Eaton keep the Express on top. In what is widely considered to be a brilliant move, Cornette hired Stan Lane, who had just split up The Fabulous Ones with Steve Keirn.

One week after their early April 1987 debut in Boston, the Express reached the semifinals of the Crockett Cup tag team tournament, losing to eventual champs Dusty Rhodes and Nikita Koloff. On May 16, 1987, they won the U.S. tag team title from Barry Windham and Ronnie Garvin in a tournament final in Atlanta.

In the course of defending their title, the Express helped Tully Blanchard and Arn Anderson win the NWA World tag title by attacking their archrivals, The Rock 'n' Roll Express, before a title defense. But the Rock 'n' Rolls got the last word in that feud, as they beat the Midnights in a scaffold match at Starrcade '87. It was time for the Express to meet new challenges.

One challenge was provided by The Fantastics, who won the U.S. belts from Lane and Eaton on April 26, 1988, in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The



Stan Lane, Bobby Eaton, and Jim Cornette claim they're the only Midnight Express worth talking about.

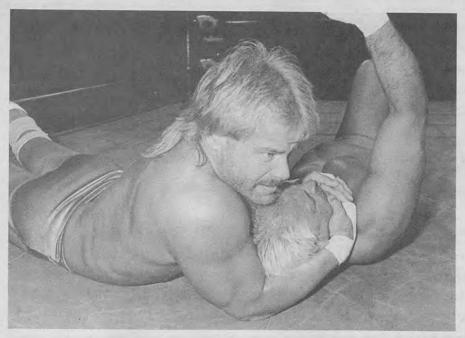
decision was controversial; Cornette's subsequent appeal was rejected by the NWA Board of Directors. During the 1988 Great American Bash, however, the Midnights regained the U.S. belts.

Around this time, Cornette challenged J.J. Dillon, manager of The Four Horsemen, to give the Midnights a World title match against Blanchard and Anderson. After heated words were exchanged between these two former friends, several matches were signed. On September 10, 1988, the Midnights won the title in Philadelphia. The next day, Blanchard and Anderson left the NWA, and Cornette and his men proudly boasted that they were the cause.

Though forced to relinquish their U.S. title, the Midnights were once again at the top of the tag team scene. Before long, however, their reign was brutally ended by The Road Warriors, who had just turned rulebreaker; that match took place on October 29, 1988, in New Orleans.

The Midnights didn't have long to be gloomy about losing their belts. In November, as Stan Lane was wrestling a TV match, Dangerously, Condrey, and Randy Rose stormed the ring. Dangerously bloodied Cornette with his portable phone, giving notice that his Midnight Express was a new and dangerous force in the NWA. The incident was especially sweet for Condrey, who had sought revenge for being kicked out of Cornette's Express. Their war continues to this day.

Whatever the outcome of the Express/Express feud, the athletic abilities of Eaton and Lane, combined with Cornette's managerial genius, confirm that this version of The Midnight Express is one of the great teams in the sport today.





Eaton whacks Robert Gibson with Cornette's tennis racket during the scaffold match between the Midnights and The Rock 'n' Roll Express at Starrcade '87 (left). Lane chinlocks Ronnie Garvin (above); the Midnights beat Garvin and Barry Windham to win the U.S. tag belts in 1987. Eaton, a master of high-flying maneuvers, targets Arn Anderson (right); Arn and Tully Blanchard lost the NWA tag title to the Midnights before leaving the NWA.







Lane executes a spinebreaker against Bobby Fulton of The Fantastics (left). Eaton thrusts a knee into Road Warrior Hawk (above). Last October, the Midnights lost the NWA World tag team title to the Warriors in New Orleans.

THE WRESTLER PANEL EXAMINES



JUNKYARD DOG

THE WRESTLER'S panel of experts will offer their candid opinions of one of wrestling's stars. Whether an up-and-coming youngster or an established superstar in his own right, our panel will always be frank and honest without fear of reprisal



Junkyard Dog blocks Hercules' punch and throws one of his own. After four years in the WWF, JYD has journeyed to the NWA, where he has been teaming with Ivan Koloff in the Russian's war against Paul Jones and The Russian Assassins. Did Junkyard peak in the WWF? Our experts are split in their views.



CAPT. LOU ALBANO

"Ah, my ol' buddy JYD! This man is a credit to wrestling, a credit to the NWA, and a credit to wrestling, daddy. As far as I'm concerned, people like Hulk Hogan and Randy Savage owe a lot to this guy. After all, the top contenders would have to get past Junkyard before they got WWF World title shots—and a lot of 'em never got past JYD. Now he's in the NWA, and Windham and Flair better watch out, 'cause the Dog is hungry for some new bones to chew."

Capt. Lou Albano, long known as "The Guiding Light," has guided 13 tag teams to an unmatched 16 WWF World tag team titles.



LARRY HENNIG

"Junkyard Dog, 'Grab Them Cakes,' he shakes the ropes and all the fans go nuts. This is one of the few dogs I've ever seen that carries his own leash, at least. But he's not much of a wrestler. In fact, the rumor mill has it that the main reason he left the WWF was because my boy, 'Mr. Perfect,' beat him so thoroughly that he had no recourse but to take off for parts unknown. That makes him another sorry victim of the Hennig legend—and a real dog."

Larry "The Ax" Hennig is a four-time former AWA World tag team champion; he held three of those titles with Harley Race.



KILLER KOWALSKI

"Everybody calls Junkyard Dog a great wrestler, but he hasn't even been close to being a top contender for years. All the fans love him—particularly the little kids, who'll take to anybody with catchy music—but he seems to be lacking killer instinct when big matches are on the line. Now he's in the NWA, but I'm afraid he's bitten off more than he'll be able to chew. He was pretty tough some years ago, but this is one legend whose time has long passed."

Killer Kowalski, one of the most sadistic rulebreakers in the sport's history, runs a wrestling school in Reading, Massachusetts.



LOU THESZ

"A great man, and a great talent. But JYD has slowed down during the past couple of years. He's listed at 260, but he's recently put on at least 25 pounds, and it's affected his timing and endurance severely. His 'big thump' powerslam is still a potent weapon, but he's got to be at top strength to make it effective against larger opponents. He'd be well-advised to forget about the music and the records and concentrate on getting back into fighting form."

Lou Thesz held the NWA World title six times during his fabulous 50-year career. Many consider him the greatest all-round wrestler in history.



PROF. TORU TANAKA

"This Junkyard Dog is well respected by many members of the Japanese wrestling community because of his feud with Kendo Nagasaki a few years ago. He has proved his honor and courage by besting that wrestling master. But today, this man has gone too far to please fans. He also breaks wrestling rules by using that chain of his against more worthy opponents. He should hang his head in shame for such violent, disgraceful conduct."

Prof. Tanaka, a three-time co-holder of the WWF World tag team title with Mr. Fuji, is currently a successful actor.



JACK BRISCO

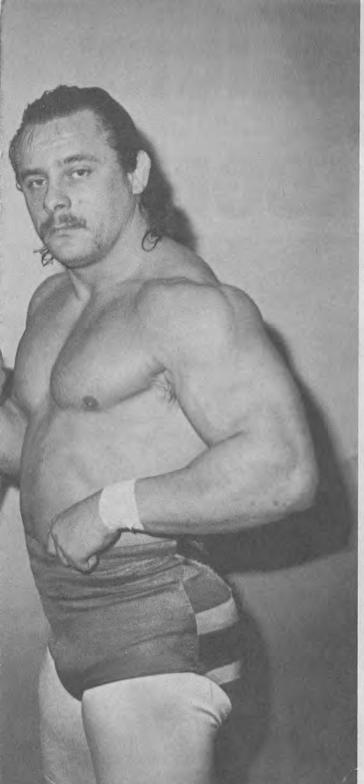
"Another man who has vastly underrated scientific skills. You know, many of to-day's holds are taken for granted by a lot of the younger fans. It wasn't all that long ago that the running powerslam was still a new innovation, and JYD was one of the first to do it with unsurpassed strength and accuracy. He's also one of the nicest guys ever to step in a wrestling ring. Wrestling can be proud of the Junk-yard Dog, and I'm proud to call him my friend."

Jack Brisco is a two-time former NWA World champion, and a three-time former NWA World tag team champion with brother Jerry.

You Can Go Home Again: THE BRITISH BULLDOGS TRIUMPHANT STAMPEDE RETURN

By Dave Rosenbaum

MAGINE THIS FAIRY-TALE scene: Hometown heroes leave hometown and make it big in the big town. Heroes stay in big town for several years, make money, win prizes, but decide they're getting bored. Meanwhile, back in the hometown, evil men have taken over. Hometown heroes save the



Photos by Bob Leonard

After nearly five years in the WWF, The British Bulldogs decided it was time for a change of scenery. They left the WWF, returned to Calgary, and won the Stampede International tag belts from The Cuban Commandos, completing a real-life fairy tale



Dynamite Kid and Davey Boy Smith (left) departed the WWF and returned to the Stampede area, where they promptly won the North American tag team title. Smith armlocks Jerry Morrow (above). The Bulldogs achieved their earliest successes in Stampede.

day by returning home and obliterating the evil men. Everybody cheers the conquering heroes!

Sound impossible? Sound like a fairy tale that can never come true, something we read about in books or see in Walt Disney movies? After all, in this day and age, Prince Valiant *never* comes home to save the day. These days, the evil villains are left to wreak havoc while the home-

town heroes are off somewhere else where they've forgotten about their hometown roots.

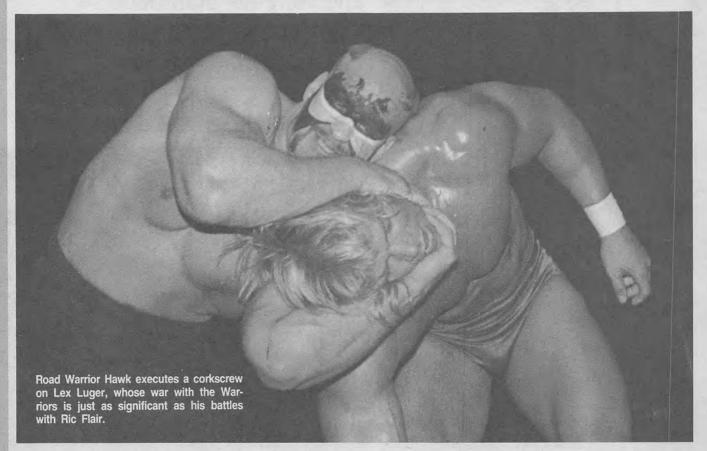
But wait, it is true! This story isn't something out of a child's imagination. It really happened, and it happened not too long ago in Calgary, Alberta, where The British Bulldogs returned to the scene of their early heroics and saved the town (or, more precisely, the Stampede area

and its fans) from the evil activities of The Cuban Commandos!

Okay, maybe this *is* pushing the analogy a bit. The Bulldogs, after all, weren't born in Calgary—or anywhere in Canada, or even the North American continent. Davey Boy Smith and Dynamite Kid were both born in England.

But Calgary is where Dynamite (Continued on page 50)

ROAD WARRIORS STING & LUGER:



NWA Power Struggle

By Bob Smith .

AUL ELLERING HAD a plan, would have extremely shocking sured us that Sting would be well repercussions.

"Sting was ripe for the taking," said the nefarious manager. "We came evident. What weaknesses?

You'd love to know, wouldn't a blueprint for terror that you? The things we learned ason his way down the path to destruction."

We may never find out precisehad studied his moves for ly the weaknesses Ellering was months. Certain weaknesses be- talking about, but we know all too well the details of the Warriors'

attack on Sting and Lex Luger in Richmond, Virginia, last October. Hawk and Animal had Sting as their partner in an NWA six-man title match because Dusty Rhodes was making a charity appearance at the time. The unexpected substitution fit the Warriors' plans just fine: They injured Sting and dis-



Road Warrior Animal slugs Sting (left) and chinlocks Luger (bottom). At first, the Warriors wanted only to deal with Sting. But when Luger came to Sting's aid, Hawk and Animal suddenly had another target.

posed of Luger when he charged the ring to help his friend.

"What an idiot Sting is!" Hawk mocked. "We set him up and he took the bait. That's what he gets for being such a lousy partner. I don't know why we ever did anything for him in the first place. Talk about a loser!"

"That's right!" barked Animal. "What did Sting—or should I say Stink—ever do for us? Nothing! He's a leech, just like Rhodes and Luger. From now on, we only answer to ourselves!"

When four of the most powerful athletes in wrestling square off in a crucial tag team title match, there's more at stake than just a pair of belts. The outcome of the war between World tag champs The Road Warriors and Sting and Lex Luger could determine who rules the NWA—and who is disgraced forever!



Photos by Floyd See

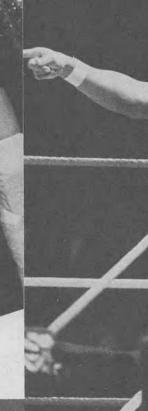
Such words from The Legion of Doom may frighten lesser men, but Sting and Luger are not lesser men. Both men are former rule-breakers, they are familiar with the Warriors' tactics, and, when threatened, they'll use those tactics against any opponents, *especially* the Warriors.

"Anybody who knows me and Lex knows we're not afraid of the Warriors," Sting said. "In fact, I think they're afraid of us, and I'll tell you why. It's Ellering. Without him in their corner, they have to think for themselves. Now, take a look at Hawk and Animal's faces and tell me how capable they are of thinking for themselves. Lex and I have them beat by a mile in that department. We outsmart 'em every time we fight 'em!"

"Listen to Sting, pal," Luger added, "he speaks the truth. We have the Warriors on a serious run. It's kind of like my feud with Flair. He talks a big game, but (Continued on page 54)

Hulkamania

GAN STOP

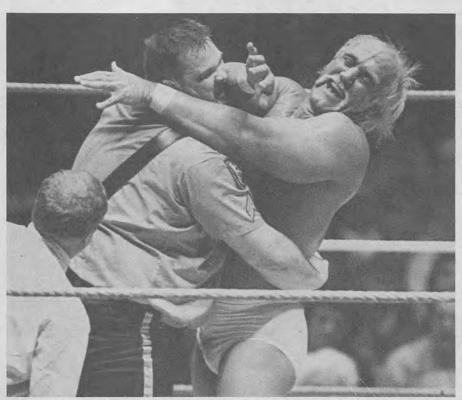


By Andy Rodriguez

Photos by David Fitzgerald

Runs Wild Again!

RANDY SAVAGE THE ONSLAUGHT?



Hulk Hogan struggles to break free from Big Bossman's bearhug. In overcoming Bossman's challenge, the "Hulkster" reignited his own competitive fires. Once again, he has a tremendous desire to be WWF World champion.

THE MONSTER IN Hulk Hogan had laid dormant for several months. He was a satisfied former champion, happy to play second fiddle to Randy Savage. Suddenly, wrestling had become recreational sport for the man who held the WWF World title for over four years.

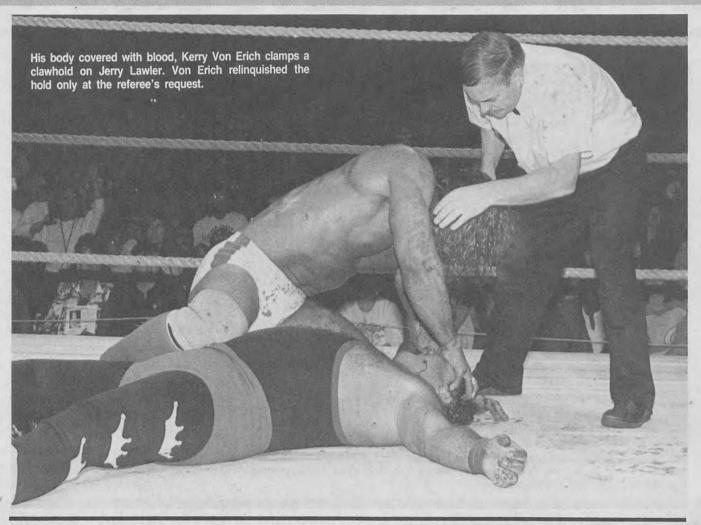
But that all changed in a matter of minutes on October 5 in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, when Big Bossman handcuffed Hogan to a ring barrier and knocked him unconscious with a nightstick. Several referees finally stopped the carnage, but the monster had been awakened. The fire was back in Hogan's eyes. The champion had returned!

Since that incident, a different Hogan—or maybe the old Hogan has emerged. He seems inspired as only once before: when he initially challenged The Iron Sheik for the (Continued on page 56)

He was a content ex-champion who basked in the glory of Randy Savage's title reign. But when Big Bossman brutally attacked Hogan, the "Hulkster" got fired up as never before. Now it looks like nobody can stop him—even the "Macho Man"!

SUPER WERE THEY RIGHT THE LAWLER-

Photos by Bill Apter & Brian Tirpak



Was Kerry Von Erich robbed of the AWA World title at SuperClash, or did the referee make the right decision in stopping the bout? Nine noted experts offer their analyses on the controversy in this *Wrestler* exclusive!

Clash Controversy: TO STOP VON ERICH BOUT?

By Craig Peters

VITH 18 MINUTES and 53 seconds gone in the title-unification match between World Class champ Kerry Von Erich and AWA World champ Jerry Lawler at SuperClash III, referee Marty Miller called for the bell to stop the match. Von Erich, whose face and upper body were a mass of blood, had clamped a vicious clawhold on Lawler and thought he won the match.

Seconds later, however, his dreams of winning a second world title were destroyed. Miller ruled that Von Erich, despite being the aggressor, could not continue due to excessive bleeding; he awarded the match to Lawler. It was a shocking decision that ended one of the most brutal and exciting matches in the sport's history.

Suddenly, it was one of the most controversial, too.

Should Miller have stopped the match? Was Von Erich capable of continuing? Would he have won if the match continued, or was he in danger of severe injury? Was Lawler on the verge of submitting? Was Miller, an AWA ref, showing bias toward Lawler? Was he under orders from AWA President Stanley Blackburn?





Lawler piledrives Von Erich (above left). Von Erich does the same to Lawler (above right). Their bout at SuperClash III was a brutal struggle between two intense competitors. It was no ordinary match, and it ended in massive controversy.

Of course, we'll never know the answers to these questions. But the editors of **The Wrestler**, in an attempt to get a consensus of opinion on the matter, spoke with several impartial observers and important figures directly involved with the incident. Excerpts of their statements follow.

Wahoo McDaniel (bled badly in previous match against Manny Fernandez): "The safety of the wrestlers is important, but when you're talking about such an im-

portant match, a different set of rules apply. In a normal match, yes, it should've been stopped, even if Von Erich was in control. But under the circumstances, with so much at stake, I'd say no way. I don't think Lawler would've submitted, and I also don't think Miller was showing bias. He just made the wrong decision."

Fritz Von Erich (Kerry's father):
"My son was robbed, plain and simple. We Von Erichs have guts, and we have enough guts to (Continued on page 60)

GIANTT



FAILURE

He is the largest and most feared man in wrestling's history, but he is also the sport's biggest failure. Andre the Giant has failed in his most recent quest to win the WWF World title. Now he might never get another chance

By Dave Rosenbaum

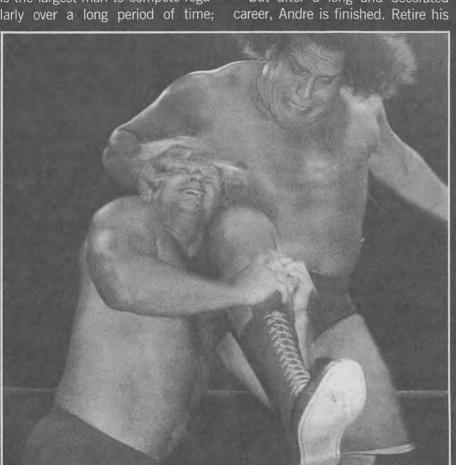
OR NEARLY TWO minutes on February 5, 1988, Andre the Giant was WWF World champion. That interval of less than 120 secthe merest fraction of Andre's 18-year career, will forever be remembered as its highlight.

It's all over for Andre.

At 7'5" and 497 pounds, Andre is the largest man to compete regularly over a long period of time;

others have been bigger, but they were freaks-not athletes-and none matched his record for longevity. At one time, he was the most popular wrestler in the sport (he was voted "Most Popular Wrestler of the Year" for 1982), and undoubtedly has long been the most feared.

But after a long and decorated



Andre the Giant knees Nick Bockwinkel in the head during a 1979 try for Bockwinkel's AWA World title (above). More recently, Andre has been pursuing Randy Savage for the WWF World belt (top right).



trunks. Get out the gold watch. Hire the caterer. A career that once held so much promise is now ending with a giant thud. It's finally time for retirement. Three strikes have passed; Andre's out.

Strike one was the first 17 years of his career. It took him to every major federation in the United States and Japan, and included title matches against NWA World champs Harley Race and Terry Funk, as well as AWA World champ Nick Bockwinkel. Andre was, however, content to live without a world title. He loved the travel, the competition, and, most of all, the fans. His failure to win a world title—or even get a shot at the WWF beltdidn't bother him. Until later.

Strike two was March 1987 through March 1988. His attitude changed. Andre took on Bobby Heenan as his manager and went

It's All Over For Andre



Andre backs away from Jake Roberts. It's not that he's afraid of Roberts; he's scared of Jake's snake Damien. Roberts appears to be using Andre as a steppingstone to the World title, a surprise considering Andre's fabled career.

after former friend Hulk Hogan. But despite a gallant effort, Andre failed to win the belt from Hogan during their famous match at WrestleMania III.

Andre won the rematch on February 5 in Indianapolis, but not without the help of imposter referee Earl Hebner, masquerading as his twin brother Dave, the scheduled official for that bout. Hogan's shoulders were clearly off the mat after the one-count, but Hebner continued the count. Andre was awarded the win and the title, but shocked the world by immediately giving the belt to DiBiase. WWF President Jack Tunney declared the title vacant, and Andre lost his chance of regaining the belt when he and Hogan battled to a doubledisqualification in round two of the WrestleMania IV tournament.

Strike three was immediately after WrestleMania IV. Heenan devised a brilliant strategy of taking Andre back to square one: a series of matches against top contenders to get Andre back into top wrestling condition. It had been argued that one of the reasons Andre had so much trouble against Hogan was because he was wrestling infrequently. Heenan increased Andre's match schedule, all the while aim-

ing at a title shot.

But it didn't work. In fact, there were signs early on of the plan's ultimate failure. In late July, Andre wrestled Hogan in the "Hulkster's" comeback match. Despite Hogan's inactivity, Andre lost. The Giant eventually worked his way into a series of matches against WWF World champion Randy Savage and came close—but not close enough—to winning the belt.

Now, Andre's match schedule is going downhill. While Bad News Brown, Rick Rude, and Big Bossman get the bulk of matches against Savage, Andre is embroiled in a feud against Jake "The Snake" Roberts. In fact, as Roberts rises up the list of title contenders—he's scored several resounding victories over Rick Rude—it appears Andre is being used by "The Snake" as a steppingstone to the World title.

Imagine! Andre the Giant has become the world's largest steppingstone!

"It's sad to see," former NWA World champion Terry Funk said. "He was one big, tough sucker back when I wrestled him. But you know, this just goes to prove something: Size isn't everything in this game. In fact, it's absolutely noth-

ing. I wasn't a very big man, but I was pretty damn successful. The thing is, Andre had some ability, he knew how to wrestle. I don't know what's happened. Some people have the ability, but they choke in the big one. Maybe Andre just couldn't handle the pressure."

Former top contender Ernie Ladd, who, at 6'9", gave Andre some memorable battles, isn't sure that Andre won't be able to bounce back. "Look, he gave me one helluva title match, and he's bigger now than he was then. You know, everyone seems to forget that Andre might have been able to beat Hogan, but he never had a chance, all because of DiBiase's shenanigans. And there are a lot of people that think he had him pinned in the first minute at WrestleMania III. I wouldn't count him out."

But can a wrestler bounce back so many times after so many disappointments? Andre has reached the point where he seems content merely to hurt opponents. He doesn't want to defeat Jake Roberts; he wants to cripple him. In the match against Savage on Saturday Night's Main Event, Andre was more concerned with Roberts' snake than with Savage's belt.

"Let me tell you something, it's sad to see a wrestler at the end of his line, but it's tough to leave this game," said former WWF World champ Bruno Sammartino, who has stepped out of retirement several times. "I know what Andre's going through. I'm not saying I feel sorry for him, but he loves the sport, he wants a world title, and he doesn't know any other way of life. Doggone it, maybe if he got rid of Heenan, he'd turn it around."

But Andre couldn't win the World title without Heenan, and he can't win one with him. It's a sad sight: He's beltless, friendless, and the fans hate him. He will leave wrestling without a title and without respect.

Such a sad end to such a magnificent career. \Box



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THE SOUARED C EYOND



▲ Before the Survivor Series, Jimmy Hart and The Honky Tonk Man stopped by radio station WMMS in Cleveland for an interview with DJ Kid Leo.



▲ Kerry Von Erich isn't camera-shy, but his daughter, Holly Brooke, appears to be. Kerry brought his daughter to Chicago for SuperClash III.



▲ "Is that me?" Don Muraco asks Assistant Editor Bob Smith after Smith shows him a story from early in his career.



▲ Arn Anderson is the latest wrestler to peruse through *The Wrestler's* photo files. Anderson saw dozens of pictures that chronicle his rise to wrestling stardom.



◄ In a rare moment of tranquility, Abdullah the Butcher allows his
manager, Gary Hart, to photograph him. Moments after this photo
was taken, Abdullah tried to eat the camera!



▲ Andre the Giant signs an autograph while at the summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago to promote Acclaim's new Wrestle-Mania video game for Nintendo.



▲ Tama bandages Samu's ankle before a match at the "Weekend With The Champions" in New York's Catskill Mountains.



▲ Tatsumi Fujinami came to SuperClash III with his wife, Kaori, and baby, Miyu. Fujinami got involved in the Wahoo McDaniel-Manny Fernandez match.

Wrestler photographer Floyd See likes Mello Yello as much as Dusty Rhodes does.

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YOUR LETTERS

(Continued from page 7)



Eddie Gilbert slugs Kevin Sullivan. Reader Bill Masters advises fans not to be fooled by Gilbert's newfound "goodness."

changed in such a short period of time? If you ask me, too remarkable.

Ron Simmons, Dusty Rhodes, and all these guys he's befriended are crazy if they trust Gilbert. You know, there's an old saying that goes, "you can't teach an old dog new tricks," and Gilbert has been wrestling the

same way for years. Why should he change now?

Let's not forget, this is the guy who attacked Willie B. Hert's kid, and threw fire at several wrestlers. He's arrogant, selfish, and he doesn't even come to the defense of his own wife, Missy Hyatt.

I don't know what's wrong with some fans. They hear a guy talking a little differently, and then automatically assume he's changed. Don't they realize Gilbert is just setting us up for an ambush? And is it just a coincidence that Rick Steiner turned good all of a sudden? I think it's only a matter of time before Steiner and Gilbert are back together again and breaking every rule in the book!

BILL MASTERS Atlanta

THE TRUTH HURTS

I have to write about the letter written by Pete Carlucci in the February 1989 issue of *The Wrestler* ("The Painful Truth"). The only thing painful was having to read it. I mean, any-



Animal shoves a chair into Barbarian's midsection. Reader Thomas Hill is convinced The Powers of Pain left the NWA because The Road Warriors were dominating them.

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YOUR LETTERS

(Continued from page 44)

body watching wrestling knows that The Powers of Pain left the NWA because they were getting their butts kicked by The Road Warriors.

As far as the Warriors "sinking into obscurity"—well, if you want to call having the NWA World tag team title, the NWA six-man title, and the Tag Team of the Year award sinking into obscurity, Pete, you need a new dictionary!

THOMAS HILL Cynthiana, KY

COLUMN-MANIA!

I'm writing to compliment you on adding two columns to *The Wrestler*. One of my favorite parts about *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* and *Inside Wrestling* was always the columns; now that *The Wrestler* has them, too, it's better than ever.

As for the columns themselves.

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BOX 48 ROCKVILLE CENTRE, NY 11571 Andy Rodriguez' "Win, Lose, Or Draw" is great. He really got to the heart of the matter in the February 1989 issue with The Powers of Pain situation. They just disappeared from the NWA out of thin air, and Andy gave us a good luck at how messed up Paul Jones and his people must have been when they found out they were leaving. Good job!

As for Bob Smith, he's obviously knowledgeable about the sport, but I have one question: Who really cares about Brad Armstrong? "Blindsided" is a great idea for a column, but Arm-



Reader Tony Castineras feels that Brad Armstrong doesn't have what it takes to be a major heavyweight champion.

strong has proven time and time again that he just isn't championship material. I'll admit that he's a fine wrestler, but there are plenty of great wrestlers out there that just don't have what it takes to be champion. I can't believe how Smith pandered to Armstrong.

Well, at least Dave Rosenbaum isn't writing a column in *The Wrestler*. Two columns for that idiot is enough. That guy is polluting *PWI* and *Inside Wrestling* beyond belief. Imagine a so-called "knowledgeable wrestling writer" thinking The Honky Tonk Man is a great wrestler. It's ridiculous!

TONY CASTINERAS Port Washington, NY□

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January 1985/COLOR PINUP: Tito Santana. Road Warriors, Billy Jack, Haves, 1984 fan ballot.

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July 1985/COLOR PINUP: Sgt. Slaughter. Hogan vs. Piper, Warriors, One Man Gang, T.A., Martel.

September 1985/COLOR PINUP: Junkyard Dog. Magnum T.A, Von Erich, Hogan, AWA scouting reports.

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April 1986/COLOR PINUP: Ric Flair. Wendi Richter, Adams & Hernandez, Dusty & Warriors vs. Flair & Andersons.

May 1986/COLOR PINUP: Rick Steam-boat. Road Warriors, Humongous, Bulldogs, Hansen vs. Martel.

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October 1986/COLOR PINUP: John Studd. Nikita Koloff, Savage vs. Bundy, Landell, Flair vs. Lugar, Simpson.

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January 1987/COLOR PINUP: Fabulous Freebirds. Roddy Piper, Nikita vs. T.A., Snuka, Simpson.

February 1987/COLOR PINUP: Savage & Elizabeth. UWF Tournament, T.A., Baby Doll, Hogan vs. Orndorff.

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MAY 1987

May 1987/COLOR PINUP: Steve Williams. Andre-Hogan, UWF Tourny, Albano, Cornette, Dynamite Kid, Kerry

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July 1987/COLOR PINUP: Midnight Rockers. Steamboat-Savage, Luger, Duggan, Garvins, Sting.

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

(Continued from page 8)

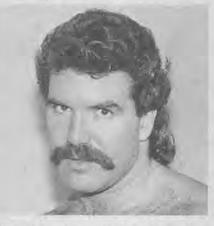
out later on. There's no way that would've happened otherwise. Then he had his foot on the ropes for the pin and Young didn't see that either. A rematch? Yeah, I want a rematch. But unless they lock us in a cage with no rules and no refs, I don't see the point."

Flair's victory was the highlight of a magnificent night of wrestling. **Kevin Sullivan** and **Steve Williams** scored a shocking upset over **The Fantastics** to win the U.S. tag belts, and **Rick Steiner** won the TV title from former teammate and current archrival **Mike Rotundo**. "I told ya I could beat him and I did," Steiner boasted afterward.

In other matches: Jim Cornette's Midnight Express defeated Paul E. Dangerously's Midnight Express ... The Russian Assassins defeated Ivan Koloff and Junkyard Dog ... Barry Windham retained his U.S. title with a countout win over Bam Bam Bigelow ... Dusty Rhodes and Sting defeated The Road Warriors by disqualification ... and JYD won the first Bunkhouse Stampede event.

New Stampede North American champion Don Muraco has signed for a series of matches against AWA World champion Jerry Lawler. Is Muraco, a WWF star for many years, already hungry for the big time? Or is he content to stay in the smaller but highly competitive Stampede area and take an occasional shot at a world title? If Muraco does beat Lawler, he'll have no choice but to defend the belt outside of Calgary. Either way, American fans will probably see more of Muraco than originally anticipated.

Scott Hall is back! The former AWA World tag team champion is wrestling in Florida and feuding with **U.S. Steel**. But Hall isn't the nice guy he once was. "Where'd that get me?" he said. "Now I'm



Scott Hall, a former AWA World tag team champion (with Curt Hennig), is now wrestling in Florida.

looking out for myself"... Carlos Colon regained the WWC Universal title from Ronnie Garvin in San Juan, Puerto Rico... The Terminator defeated U.S. Steel for the Florida title but subsequently dropped the belt to Mike Graham on Christmas night in Tampa... Masa Chono is after Dan Davis' U.S. junior heavyweight belt in the CWF; Alan Martin is also in line for a title shot.

The hottest rumor circulating in WWF circles concerns none other than WWF World champion Randy Savage and former champ Hulk Hogan. According to insiders, Savage desired a match against Hogan not only out of jealousy over Elizabeth, but also because he was getting bored with his title defenses. During December, the "Macho Man" systematically disposed of top contenders Rick Rude. King Haku. Bossman.

"When you're as talented as Savage is, you constantly need new challenges," said a WWF source. "Besides, Savage kept hearing how he wouldn't have won the belt without Hogan and how he'd wouldn't even be champion anymore if he wrestled Hogan. Elizabeth means everything to Randy, but there's more to it than



Randy Savage and Hulk Hogan battle in one of their legendary 1985 bouts. Will this feud revive in '89?

that. There's pride involved, too. This has the makings of the greatest feud of all time."

Top Gun captured the Pacific Northwest title from The Grappler on Christmas night in Portland, Oregon. More big PNW news: South African madman Col. DeBeers is feuding with Scott Peterson. DeBeers, of course, also has his hands full with Sqt. Slaughter in the AWA ... The WWF exodus continues: Butch Reed signed a contract with J.J. Dillon, but reportedly will not be a member of The Four Horsemen.

A joint WWA/All-Japan card is scheduled for February 2 in Kansas City, Missouri. This spectacular evening of wrestling features The British Bulldogs vs. The Rock 'n' Roll Express, Stan Hansen and Terry Gordy vs. Jumbo Tsuruta and Yoshiaki Yatsu, Kerry Von Erich vs. Mr. Sato, and Dory & Terry Funk vs. Johnny Ace & Danny Spivey. Tiger Mask, a Japanese wrestling legend, is also on the card.

Finally, a sad note: Mexico's legendary wrestler **Blue Demon** has retired at age 56, ending an amazing 41-year pro career. **Blue Demon Ir.**, a 22-year-old up-and-comer, will carry on his father's name.

And that's what's happening. See you at the matches!



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BULLDOGS vs. COMMANDOS

(Continued from page 31)







Smith slams Morrow (above left). Dynamite Kid backflips The Cuban Assassin (above right) and piledrives Morrow (left). Assassin and Morrow—The Cuban Commandos—were the Stampede International champions until the Bulldogs came along. Stampede fans are overjoyed to have Dynamite and Davey Boy back in their area.

and Davey Boy first started teaming in 1982. Calgary, for all intents and purposes, is the birthplace of The British Bulldogs.

The Bulldogs carved out their reputation in the Stampede area and, because of their achievements, earned a contract with the World Wrestling Federation in 1984. Their high-flying, fast-moving, scientific style immediately made them a hit with the fans. On April 7, 1986, the small-sized but big-hearted Bulldogs defeated Greg Valentine and Brutus Beefcake for the WWF World tag team belts.

Their title reign suffered a major blow in January 1987 when Dynamite Kid sustained a severe back injury; later that month, they lost the belts to The Hart Foundation. And while Dynamite eventually recovered and the Bulldogs remained top contenders to the title, they finally decided it was time to leave. So on Thanksgiving Day, shortly after becoming the seventh team eliminated in the Survivor Series tag team event, Dynamite and Davey Boy packed their bags and went home.

"I've always felt that a team or individual in any area of life, including athletics, has to stay on the move to be successful," Dynamite Kid said a few days later. "We were successful, but we had done everything we could in the WWF. What could we do but win the tag belts? We'd done that already. But in Calgary, a new challenge awaited us."

"Plus," added Davey Boy Smith, "our friends and family are in Calgary now. It's our second home."

And their home was getting besmirched by the filthy reputations of Jerry Morrow and The Cuban Assassin (also known as The Cuban Commandos), Stampede International tag team champions who were doing everything in their power to turn the belts into useless clumps of silver and gold. No team was able to dismantle the Commandos.

Re-enter the Bulldogs.

On December 7 in Calgary, after a couple of failed tries-the Bulldogs call them "warmups"-Dynamite and Davey Boy strapped the North American tag belts around their muscular waists. The Commandos was particularly outclassed on this night, and Morrow couldn't have realized what a mistake he made by climbing on the ropes and diving onto Davey Boy.

"It's gonna take more than that to beat me or Dynamite," Smith said later. "If I can't reverse a dive off the ropes, I shouldn't be wrestling. Morrow completely opened himself up."

Smith absorbed the impact of the dive and rolled over Morrow for the pin. The roar of the crowd said it all; Smith didn't have to hear the referee's count. The Cuban Commandos was broken. The British Bulldogs were back, and the belts were theirs.

"You can't describe that feeling," Dynamite Kid said. "Winning the WWF belts was exciting, and probably the greatest moment ever for us-until now. It's great to go away, come back, and discover that you haven't been forgotten, that all your old friends and fans have been following you all these years."

Dynamite and Davey Boy realize, of course, that they left behind a lot in the WWF. Regaining the World tag belts was a top priority, and they had also built up a tremendous fan following. There was enormous national attention bestowed upon them, and they were financially very comfortable.

For the past two years, most Stampede fans feared the Bulldogs would never return. But when the Bulldogs decided to go home again, it was for the best of reasons. Now they're back, they're champions again, and the fans are cheering.

May they all live happily ever after!

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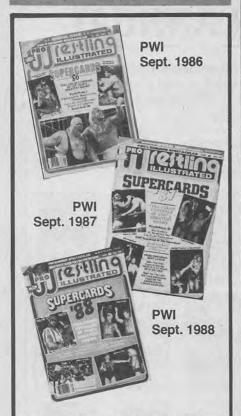
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WIN, LOSE, OR DRAW

(Continued from page 10)

of the WWF's television shows far surpasses the best efforts of the others. Throw in all the merchandise the WWF sells, and you have an organization that is strong and getting stronger.

Clearly, Turner's NWA has a mighty task ahead of it. Turner's first move, naming Jack Petrik president of the NWA's parent company, the Universal Wrestling Corporation, was an excellent one. With more than 25 years of broadcasting experience, Petrik appears to be committed to close competition with the WWF. He says he's convinced there is room at the top next to McMahon.

But McMahon is doing all he can to maintain the WWF in its exalted position, and he's succeeding. He is continuing his policy of signing top draws from other areas. Recent additions to the talent roster include Tully Blanchard, Arn Anderson, Terry Taylor, Curt Hennig, and Ronnie Garvin, the last two former world champions. Although McMahon chooses not to play up stars' past glories, the fans remember what these men have accomplished and come out to see them.

Petrik has stated that he has no intention of doing things like running a live arena card on TBS opposite a WWF pay-per-view show, but it's doubtful that McMahon will follow the same ethic. He'll most likely continue trying to sabotage the NWA, as he did on Thanksgiving 1987, when the WWF's newly created Survivor



As the new head of the NWA, Jack Petrik is committed to excellence, but, in Rodriguez' opinion, Petrik has a long way to go before reaching the level of the WWF.

Series blindsided Starrcade '87. Then there was 1988's Royal Rumble, which ran on the USA network, opposite the NWA's Bunkhouse Stampede on pay-perview. Although McMahon has publicly said he is not competing with any other organization, his intentions are clear, and they pose an ever-present threat to continued NWA growth.

Ultimately, as others have pointed out, the question of whether the NWA will reach its goals turns on the degree of Turner's personal commitment. All the promotional expertise available won't matter if Turner himself doesn't want to make the NWA the best.

I question that commitment. The man has so many other interests (the Atlanta Braves, the Hawks, CNN, TBS, etc.) that he won't give the NWA the attention it needs. From what we've heard, Turner has a soft spot in his heart for wrestling, but his cold business sense will dictate that the Universal Wrestling Corporation become just another cog in the Turner machine.

Over the last 10 years, the sport has changed dramatically. A wrestling promotion used to be a family business: the Crocketts in the Carolinas, McMahon Sr. in the Northeast, Sam Muchnick in St. Louis. They all had their distinct territories that the others didn't dare encroach upon. As we've reported so many times before, McMahon Jr. changed the rules. The corporate mentality that's been prevalent in professional sports for 20 years has, for better or worse, invaded wrestling.

Now it's McMahon's game and, as the saying goes, you can't get rich playing another man's game. But that's what Turner is trying to do. The NWA will thrive, just as the AWA, World Class, and every other promotion will. There's plenty of room in the building, but there's only one penthouse—and McMahon has the key.

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STING

(Continued from page 33)

when it comes time to pay up, he falls apart. The Warriors may match me and Sting physically—maybe!—but psychologically we have them beat hands down. Try playing mind games with us and you'll get burned bad."

But there are those familiar with Ellering's managerial career, however, who strongly disagree with Luger.

"Look, whether or not Sting and Luger like it, Ellering is going to be at ringside," said NWA expert Donald Wayne. "Paul's a master of psychological warfare. I've seen him *stare* at guys and they've turned to mush. Believe

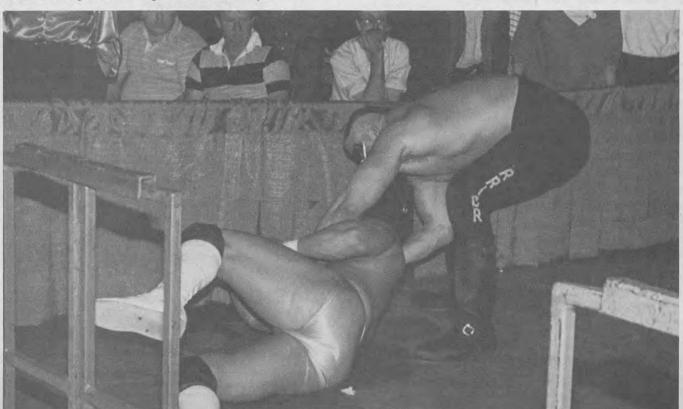
me, Sting and Luger haven't seen anything yet. They've yet to experience what it's like when Ellering turns it up a notch. Paul's got a whole bagful of tricks he hasn't unveiled yet. Just because he's been something of a good guy over the past few years doesn't mean he's forgotten how to be evil."

Whatever one thinks of Ellering's skills as a manager, he is clearly going to be a major factor in this feud. Although they don't have a manager of their own, Sting and Luger often turn to Dusty Rhodes for advice—and for tag team partnership. At Starrcade, while Luger challenged Flair for the NWA World title, Dusty teamed with Sting to wrestle the Warriors for the World tag belts.

"Son, anytime I can help my good friends, I am happy to oblige," Rhodes said. "They're good men, the best we have. The Warriors are gonna be the sorriest



Luger prepares to whip Animal across the ring (above). Hawk punishes Luger on the arena floor (below). Sting and Luger say they'd love to win the Warriors' NWA World tag title, but their ultimate goal is The Legion of Doom's collapse.



bunch of losers you ever saw when we do it to 'em. Sting and Luger represent a new era in the NWA, if you will. By the summer of '89, I predict those Warriors will be run clear out of here. Ooh, baby, I can't wait! It's gonna be soooooooo sweet!"

But now it's too early for Rhodes to celebrate. Three matches during "Battlestarr week," the NWA's prelude to Starrcade, gave a good indication of how this Warriors-Sting/Luger war is progressing. There were no winners; two matches ended in a double-countout; the third was a double-disqualification.

"I've wrestled all four of these men," said Steve "Dr. Death" Williams, a recent addition to Kevin Sullivan's Varsity Club. "They're all good. Damn good. I'm not gonna get involved in their affairs, because frankly I don't care for these guys. But I'll say this: The guys who win this one are gonna be big men around here for a long time to come. And the ones who lose, well, they're gonna be hangin' their heads low for a pretty long time, too."

What about the NWA World tag team title? Isn't that the most important consideration?

"This has gone far beyond any title," Sting asserted. "This is about proving a point. Hawk, Animal, and Ellering think they can get ahead by lying and cheating and launching sneak-attacks. That might work with some of these other teams, but me and Lex are gonna make sure they don't get away with it on us. I don't care if it takes months or even years; Lex and I are gonna finish this one out on top. Our fans can count on us!"

"Just a little more time," Ellering claims with a sinister smile, "and we'll slam the door in their faces. Six months from now you'll be asking who Sting and Luger were."

A chilling thought.



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HULKAMANIA

(Continued from page 35)

WWF World title in early 1984. Indeed, when Bossman again hand-cuffed the "Hulkster" to the ring ropes at the Survivor Series on Thanksgiving, Hogan reacted like a wild animal. When Elizabeth finally set him free, Hogan stormed the ring and disposed of King Haku in a matter of seconds.

Randy Savage was one of the benefactors of that victory. Savage had endured a severe beating at Haku's hands for several minutes



before he managed to tag off to Hogan. But while Savage shared in the victory, he was perturbed moments later when Hogan celebrated with Elizabeth. By now, Savage's angry glare at Hogan has been seen by all. But two important questions remain:

Is Savage's anger enough to overcome Hogan's fire?

With Hulkamania running wild again, can the "Macho Man" stop Hogan's onslaught?

"This is an interesting situation. Although it appears Savage is the aggressor, since he's the one mad at Hogan for touching Elizabeth, Hogan has the momentum," said



Bossman punches Hogan in the face (above). The "Hulkster" slams the former prison guard (left). Hogan dominated Bossman so completely that Bossman wasn't able to give Savage as tough a challenge as was expected.

WWF expert Thomas Pilliard. "Bossman got him going, and now Hogan's not about to stop. He's like an out-of-control freight train. If Savage wants a piece of him, that's his mistake. Remember, Savage didn't do too well against Hogan back in 1986 and '87."

The most interesting aspect of the developing Hogan-Savage situation is that, at press time, Hogan still hasn't publicly requested a match against Savage. In fact, he seems to take pride in the "Macho Man's" title reign, probably because he had so much to do with getting it started at WrestleMania IV. Hogan is happy that a fan favorite is champion. He is content to ward off the evil rulebreakers that threaten to destroy his message of hard work, fair play, and clean living.

So, Hogan's anger is directed away from Savage and toward such hated rivals as Bossman, Akeem, Slick, and Brother Love.

"The problem now is that Savage is redirecting Hogan's anger toward himself," Pilliard said. "This is a critical mistake. Savage has more pure wrestling ability than Hogan, but nobody has Hogan's determination and strength, and nobody can rally

a crowd like he can. If Hogan and Savage meet, you know the crowd's going to be behind the 'Hulkster.' "

Of course, Savage has never been known as a deep thinker. He sees Hogan hugging Elizabeth, merely a celebratory gesture, and thinks, I'm going to get this man for trying to steal my woman. He doesn't realize Hogan isn't after Elizabeth. Most importantly, however, he doesn't realize what kind of man he's challenging. Hulk Hogan never gives in.

"There have been better wrestlers than Hogan, but nobody wants to win as badly as he does," former WWF Intercontinental champ Don Muraco said. "I've wrestled him several times and it never got easier. You see, I knew I was more talented than him, but he has something inside that can't be described. It's this fire. You look into his eyes and it's almost scary. Beat that, and you beat him. It might be impossible, but it's the only way."

Savage, however, might be able to parlay his love for Elizabeth and jealousy regarding her into a victory over Hogan. Perhaps nobody has beaten Hogan because nobody has had enough at stake. Savage would be putting his belt and his pride up against Hogan. It could be a lethal combination. In this case, Savage would have much more to lose than Hogan.

"Something people don't understand is how determined we champions can be," NWA World champ Ric Flair said. "When some guy steps into the ring against me, he might know my strategy and my moves. He might be able to wrestle me on even terms. But when the going gets tough, I'm going to have the edge. He'll submit because he has nothing to lose. I'll never submit. One thing I've noticed is my upponents never dig down as deep as I do.

Recalling the incident where Bossman attacked him with his nightstick, Hogan tries to stuff his headband down the Bossman's throat.

"I'll elaborate," Flair continued. "Put two men in the ring, equals in every possible way—skill, physique, stamina, everything. Make one man the champ, the other the challenger. The champ will win every time. Then turn it around and make the challenger the champ and the champ the challenger. You'll get the opposite result. That's why I say nobody, and I mean *nobody*, gets as fired up as I do."

But Flair is not Hogan and Savage is not Hogan. Neither man has Hogan's brand of determination, an almost indescribable will to win. And now that Bossman has fired up Hogan once again, few men can stop him.

Can Savage? We're about to find out.

BACK ISSUES

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INTRODUCING

(Continued from page 20)

same "Introducing" included this statement about AI, startling because it turned out to be so wrong:

The sport fascinates him. That's why it's almost impossible to think of him ever becoming a rulebreaker. He loves the rules, for they are part of wrestling, a facet of what makes the sport exciting. To break the rules would be to violate his love for the sport.

When one talks about comparisons with his famous brother, it's easy to see how Lou might one day follow the same path.

"I consider that the greatest compliment, because AI is a great wrestler," Lou said, "I'll consider myself a success when I'm half the wrestler AI is."

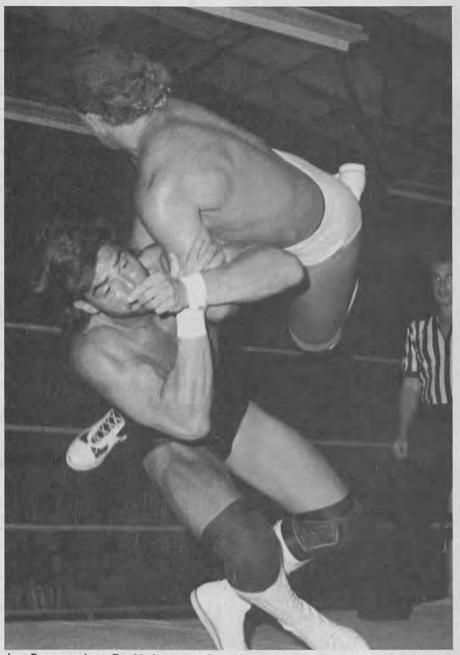
Born and raised in Florida, Lou played high school and college football, and was an outstanding high school wrestler, receiving scholarship offers from Florida, Florida State, Kentucky, and Vanderbilt. Lou decided to go into bodybuilding, though, and was the 1983 Mr. Tampa.

"I enjoyed high school wrestling and I did really well," Lou said. "I had scholarships, but I never pursued them, really. But when I went into bodybuilding, it naturally led to wrestling. I got involved in wrestling through AI."

In 1985, Lou decided to follow his brother into the sport. And, like his brother, he was trained by the best. Steve Keirn, Mike Graham, and Boris Malenko—who also trained Al—worked with Lou in late 1985, leading up to his debut the following year in Global Wrestling.

"I'll never forget it," Lou said. "My first pro match was against Scott Williams. I beat him in about 11 minutes using powerslams. That was quite a night."

Lou is currently managed by Ron and Ron, a pair of popular



Lou Perez armdrags Frankie Lancaster. Perez is a great scientific wrestler whose favorite finishing maneuver is the spinning toehold, a move also favored by his brother. Lou says he's flattered by comparisons with Al.

radio personalities from a station in Tampa. Ron Diaz and Ron Bennington have helped transform the 6-foot, 223-pound Perez into a hometown hero.

Perez can often be heard on the radio, but he's more interested in going after the Florida junior heavyweight title, currently held by Jim Backlund. Perez has certainly shown he has the ability to win the title; he has battled World Class light heavyweight champ Eric Embry to a pair of 30-minute draws.

"To me, being able to take a veteran like Embry to the limit twice is a sign that I'm ready to break through with my career," Lou said. "He's a great competitor, and to win a title like that would be a great honor."

And if Lou continues to be anything like his brother, he'll be no stranger to honors—and championships—in the years to come.

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July 1988/Stories include: Hogan-Savage-DiBiase, Kerry & Hayes, Sting. August 1988/Stories include: Savage, Missy Hyatt, Sting, Hayes, Honky Tonk. September 1988/SPECIAL ISSUE: Color coverage of WMIV, Parade of Champs, Crockett Cup. Plus: Lawler,

Von Erich, Hart, Cornette. October 1988/Stories include: Megapowers vs. Megabucks, Horse-men, Lawler.

November 1988/Stories include: Kerry vs. Lawler, Windham, Luger, Muraco. December 1988/Stories include: Powers of Pain, Ultimate, Flair, Piper

January 1989/Stories include: R&R Express, Hogan, Sting, Arn, Kerry-Lawler. February 1989/Stories include: Hogan-Bossman, Tully & Am, Warriors-Windham-Sting

March 1989/Stories include: Hennig, Midnights-Midnights, Fuller & Golden,

INSIDE WRESTLING

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١	☐ SEPT 79	☐ SEPT 82	☐ SEPT 84	☐ JUNE 86	□ MAR 88
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LAWLER vs. VON ERICH

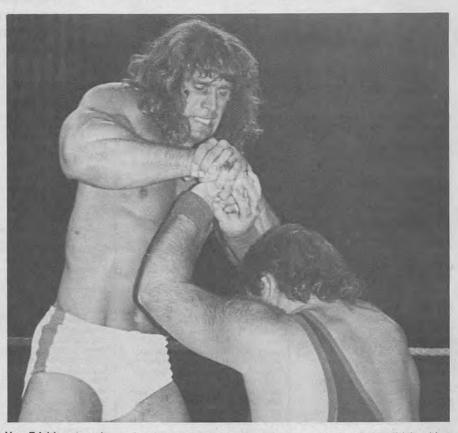
(Continued from page 37)

bleed a little and come back. What happened to my son was nothing; it's what was about to happen to Lawler that that little creep Miller should've been worried about. What made me laugh was how, afterward, Blackburn and [Verne] Gagne were talking about how good a decision Miller made. Of course they thought it was a good decision! They made it for him!"

Tommy Young (NWA referee): "Well, if you remember, I was the referee when the guy from the Maryland State Athletic Commission ordered me to stop the Ric Flair-Lex Luger match in Baltimore last July. Personally, I stopped that have wouldn't match, but I had no choice. But as a referee, I have two responsibilities: one, to assure that the match is conducted fairly; two, the health of the participants. They're going all-out, so there's no way you can say a wrestler is a good judge of whether he should be allowed to continue. I don't care what's on the line, health and safety are top priorities."

Stanley Blackburn (AWA president): "Mr. Von Erich was bleeding terribly, and the match had to be stopped. After seeing what happened in the previous match, I said to Verne, 'We can't allow this to happen. These titles are extremely important, but they're not as important as a person's life and career.' I then told referee Miller to stop the match if he felt one of the participants was bleeding too badly. He followed my orders to the letter, and I'm glad he did. Mr. Von Erich no longer has his belt, but at least he has his health."

Gordon Solie (veteran announcer): "I've been watching this sport for a long time, and I could count on one hand the number of matches I've seen stopped be-



Von Erich's power keeps Lawler on the mat (above). Lawler unloads on Von Erich with a fist (below). Lawler won both belts, but Kerry doesn't consider himself a loser.



cause of blood. Look, this is a tough sport, and it's for tough men. If Von Erich was that weak, Lawler would've been able to pin him. As it was, Von Erich had that iron claw on Lawler. I'm not sure the ref made the right move."

Frank Dusek (World Class official): "A conspiracy? Now that's a very strong word, and I don't want to make accusations. But I was sitting at ringside, and I don't see how they could stop the match when Kerry was in total control. And if they had to stop it, just declare it a draw! I realize the rules stipulated there had to be a winner, but if that's the case, they shouldn't have stopped match. Besides, if Miller had let it go another 30 seconds, Kerry would've won."

Kerry Von Erich: "I saw Blackburn raise his hand and signal Miller to stop the match, and if that's not a setup, I don't know what is. Blackburn saw that his AWA man was about to lose the title—I had Lawler beat—and did something about it. Yeah, there was a conspiracy. All I know is that I bled an awful lot for nothing, just to get beaten by a foreign object and a cheating official."

Jerry Lawler: "I honestly believe that if the match wasn't stopped, Kerry would've bled his way into the intensive care unit. I would hope that an official would do the same for me if I was in that position. You see, Kerry wasn't going to say, 'I'm bleeding too much to continue.' Somebody had to protect him. By the way, there's no way I was going to submit. You just don't give up the World title that easily."

Marty Miller: "Very simply, I was told to stop the match if one of the participants was bleeding too heavily. Now, I've been refereing for a long time, but I haven't seen too many people bleed like Kerry did. That was no conspiracy, just common sense. I'm an honest man."

Wictory Sports Persting

If you missed out on the excitement of VICTORY SPORTS WRESTLING when it was on sale on the newsstand, have no fear: A limited number of copies are available through the mail. Each issue is jam-packed with profiles of the biggest superstars in wrestling. And, as a special bonus, each issue of VICTORY SPORTS WRESTLING contains a fabulous full-color centerfold! Quantities are limited, so order yours today.





WINTER 1985

SUMMER 1986

WINTER 1984/Color pinup: Billy Jack Haynes. Stories include: Ventura, Adams, Martel, Flair, Reed.

FALL 1985/Color pinup: Steve Keirn & Stan Lane. Stories include: Albano & Hogan, DiBiase, Warriors, Garvin.

WINTER 1985/Color pinup: Barry Windham. Stories include: Hogan, Zbyszko, Kerry, R&R Express, Steamboat, Thesz.

SPRING 1986/Color pinup: The Road Warriors. Stories include: Martel, Savage vs. Poffo, Hogan, Santana, Steamboat.

SUMMER 1986/Color pinup: Rock 'n' Roll Express & Magnum T.A. Stories include: Flair, Warriors, JYD, Magnum, Williams.

FALL 1986/Color pinup: Randy Savage. Stories include: R&R Express, Missy, Roberts, Windham. Luger, Rhodes.

WINTER 1986/Color pinup: Hulk Hogan. Stories include: Flair, Freebirds, Hogan, Andre, Watts, Haynes, Fantastics. SPRING 1987/Color pinup: The Four Horsemen. Stories include: Ventura, T.A., Bulldogs, Adias, Savage-Steamboat.

SUMMER 1987/Color pinup: Road Warriors workout. Stories include: Hogan-Andre, Rockers, Koloff, Warriors, Hall-Luger.

FALL 1987/Color pinup: Dark Journey. Stories include: Albano, Hogan, T.A., Lane, Hyatt, Hennig, Luger.

WINTER 1987/Color pinup: Jesse Ventura. Stories include: Kerry, Rhodes, Hogan, Flair, Honky Tonk, DiBiase.

SPRING 1988/Color pinup: Elizabeth. Stories include: Hennig, Koloff, Savage, Strike Force, Warriors, Andre-Hogan.

SUMMER 1988/Color pinup: Missy Hyatt. Stories include: Rock 'n' Roll Express, Hogan, Sting, Luger, Owen Hart, Animal.

FALL 1988/Color pinup: Madusa Miceli. Stories include: Savage, Hyatt, Von Erich, Triple Dome, Demolition, Steamboat, Heenan, Lawler.

WINTER 1988/Color pinup: Randy Savage. Stories include: DiBiase, Flair, Duggan, Sting, Piper, Luger, Brody.

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CORRESPONDENTS REPORTS

(Continued from page 16)



Makhan Singh applies a nervehold to Don Muraco, who went on to defeat Singh for the Stampede North American title. Muraco had only recently left the WWF.

into the timekeeper's table, cutting his forehead. Despite the bleeding, Muraco fought on brilliantly and powerslammed Singh. As Muraco went for the pin, an IWA official stopped the match for what he termed "excessive bleeding." Singh was awarded the match and retained his title, but not for long: Muraco won the belt several days later in Medicine Hat, Alberta.

In other bouts: The British Bulldogs defeated The Cuban Commandos by countout ... Johnny Smith defeated Steve DiSalvo by DQ ... Vulkan Singh pinned Leo Burke ... Chris Benoit pinned Rip Rogers ... Beef Wellington defeated Steve Blackman ... Vinnie Valentino beat Goldie Rogers.

Washington, DC (Correspondent—Raymond Ney): One of the exciting matches at the DC Armory was a tag team battle pitting Barry Windham and Abdullah the Butcher against Lex Luger and Bam Bam Bigelow. Both Gary Hart and J.J. Dillon were at

ringside for Windham and Abdullah.

As Luger was shaking hands with the fans, Abdullah attacked him, but Luger quickly recovered and retaliated. Throughout the match, Abdullah was his usual violent self, throwing chairs, bashing tables, and using foreign objects.

The end came when Abdullah whipped Bigelow into the turn-buckle. As the Butcher charged

Bigelow to finish him off, Bigelow stuck his leg out and hit Abdullah in the face. That enabled Bam Bam to pin the Butcher.

In other bouts: Bobby Fulton drew with Larry Zbyszko . . . The Commandos defeated The Texas Broncos . . . Ric Flair battled to a draw with Rick Steiner . . . Sting & Dusty Rhodes beat The Road Warriors by DQ . . . Lex Luger won a \$25,000 bunkhouse battle royal.

Cape Girardeau, MO (Correspondent—Chris Vetter): Both The Ultimate Warrior and The Honky Tonk Man started fighting before the bell rang for this Intercontinental title main event. The Warrior controlled most of the match, until Jimmy Hart interfered. Ultimate grabbed Hart, lifted him over his head, and threw him at Honky Tonk. The Warrior then covered Honky for the pin to retain his belt.

In other bouts: Sam Houston pinned Danny Davis ... Paul Roma defeated Nikolai Volkoff ... Steve Lombardi defeated Scott Casey ... The Brain Busters beat The Rockers ... Rick Rude pinned Hillbilly Jim ... The Rockers won a battle royal.



As he has so many times before, The Ultimate Warrior unloads on The Honky Tonk Man. Honky Tonk has failed in all his attempts to regain the Intercontinental belt.

YOU ASKED US

(Continued from page 18)

could I or any other fan become a wrestling writer?"—Greg Delaney, Campbellton, NB

A: "I was a general sports writer who got into wrestling only after I came to work for *The Wrestler*," Rosenbaum responded. "The best advice I could give any aspiring young journalist is to write, and write often, no matter what you write about. Get involved with your school paper. Take a creative-writing course. Sure, it's important to know a lot about wrestling and be enthusiastic about it, but you won't be able to share that enthusiasm with your readers if you can't write well."

- Q: "I have a question for The Road Warriors and Paul Ellering: Why did it take you guys so long to dump the people who have been using you all these years?"—Sandy Robinson, Philadelphia
- A; Paul Ellering answered for himself and his men: "Sometimes, my friend, it's difficult to see the forest for the trees. In other words, if we had stepped back a moment and taken a look at the big picture, we would have seen that all these people claiming to be our friends were just out to stab us in the back. The situation has changed considerably. No longer will The Legion of



Kerry Von Erich puts the claw on Jerry Lawler during their bout at SuperClash.

Doom give a damn about what anyone else is doing. When we won that NWA tag team title, we sent a chilling message throughout the world of wrestling. Now we control the agenda. We call the shots. Whether they admit it or not, every stinking team in the NWA shakes with fear whenever they hear our names."

- Q: "My question is for AWA President Stanley Blackburn: If there is even the slightest controversy in an important title match, why don't you have the title held up and sanction a tournament?"—Vinny Carolan, Stoughton, MA
- A: "It's not as easy to hold up a title as you might think," Blackburn said. "For that action to be taken,



Paul Ellering says The Road Warriors were sick of caring about fellow wrestlers.

I have to convene a meeting of the AWA Board of Directors. Our board members travel all over the globe, and it's difficult to get them all together in one place. It's much easier simply to sign a rematch between the combatants. These men hate to see titles held up; they want to settle their differences in the ring. Also, a tournament is very time-consuming. It takes weeks and sometimes months before a new champion is chosen. Only in the most extreme and controversial cases will I request that a title be held up."

THE EXCITEMENT LIVES ON! THE SUPERSTARS OF A SUPER SUMMER!



The December 1988 edition of The Wrestler was a collectors' dream! It included a dynamic eightpage FULL-COLOR section featuring "The Superstars Of A Super Summer'' competing in some of 1988's greatest cards and matches! Included in this exciting full-color section: Hulk Hogan, Sting, Randy Savage, Lex Luger, Rick Rude, The Ultimate Warrior, Jerry Lawler, Ric Flair, Hacksaw Duggan, The Fantastics, Dusty Rhodes, Ted DiBiase, Barry Windham, The Honky Tonk Man, and Nikita Koloff! Also included in this magnificent special issue is a full analysis of the summer's top action, plus all the regular Wrestler stories and features. This issue was a newsstand sellout, but we have a limited number of back issues available for the collectors' bargain price of only \$5.00 each. Don't be disappointed-order vours today!

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Wrest er



Kerry Von Erich

TOP10

- 1 RANDY SAVAGE 245, Sarasota, FL WWF World champion
- 2 RIC FLAIR
 243, Minneapolis, MN
 NWA World champion
- 3 JERRY LAWLER
 234, Memphis, TN
 AWA World & WCCW champion
- 4 BARRY WINDHAM 263, Sweetwater, TX U.S. heavyweight champion
- 5LEX LUGER 268, Chicago, IL No. 2 contender: NWA title
- 6 HULK HOGAN
 302, Venice Beach, CA
 No. 3 contender: WWF title
- 7 THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR 280, Queens, NY WWF Intercontinental champion
- 8STING 260, Venice Beach, CA No. 3 contender: NWA title
- 9 KERRY VON ERICH 260, Denton, TX No. 2 contender: AWA & WCCW titles
- 1 OBAD NEWS BROWN 280, New York, NY No. 2 contender: WWF title

TAG TEAMS

- 1 THE ROAD WARRIORS
 Combined weight: 567 pounds
 NWA World tag team champions
- 2 DEMOLITION Combined weight: 585 pounds WWF World tag team champions
- 3 PAT TANAKA & PAUL DIAMOND Combined weight: 456 pounds AWA World tag team champions
- 4 STAN LANE & BOBBY EATON
 Combined weight: 462 pounds
 No. 2 contenders: NWA tag team title
- 5 STEVE WILLIAMS & KEVIN SULLIVAN Combined weight: 517 pounds U.S. tag team champions
- 6WARLORD & BARBARIAN
 Combined weight: 655 pounds
 No. 1 contenders: WWF tag team title
- 7 THE SAMOAN SWAT TEAM Combined weight: 510 pounds World Class tag team champions
- BDENNIS CONDREY & RANDY ROSE Combined weight: 461 pounds No. 3 contenders: NWA tag team title
- 9 THE BRITISH BULLDOGS Combined weight: 461 pounds Stampede Int'l tag team champions
- 10ROBERT FULLER & JIMMY GOLDEN
 Combined weight: 473 pounds
 CWA tag team champions

NWA

World Champion: RIC FLAIR

243, Minneapolis, MN

- 1—BARRY WINDHAM 263, Sweetwater, TX
- 2—LEX LUGER 268, Chicago, IL
- 3—STING 260, Venice Beach, CA
- 4—EDDIE GILBERT 222, Lexington, TN
- 5—BAM BAM BIGELOW 368, Mt. Laurel, NJ
- 6—RICK STEINER 248, Detroit, MI
- 7—DUSTY RHODES 302, Austin, TX
- 8—JUNKYARD DOG 305, Charlotte, NC
- 9-MIKE ROTUNDO 245, Syracuse, NY
- 10—STEVE WILLIAMS 265, Norman, OK

WWF

World Champion: RANDY SAVAGE

245, Sarasota, FL

- 1—THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR 280, Queens, NY
- 2—BAD NEWS BROWN 280, New York, NY
- 3—HULK HOGAN 302, Venice Beach, CA
- 4—BIG BOSSMAN 348, Cobb County, GA
- 5—ANDRE THE GIANT 497, Grenoble, France
- 6—THE HONKY TONK MAN 255, Memphis, TN
- 7—HACKSAW DUGGAN 280, Glens Falls, NY
- 8—TED DIBIASE 247, Omaha, NB
- 9—KING HAKU 274, Tonga
- 10—CURT HENNIG 235, Minneapolis, MN

AWA

World Champion: JERRY LAWLER

234, Memphis, TN

- 1—GREG GAGNE 220, Robbinsdale, MN
- 2—KERRY VON ERICH 260, Denton, TX
- 3—WAHOO McDANIEL 280, Midland, TX
- 4—SGT. SLAUGHTER
- 310, Parris Island, SC 5—THE IRON SHEIK
- 263, Teheran, Iran 6—JEFF JARRETT
- 200, Hendersonville, TN
- 7—COL. DeBEERS 248, Cape Town, South Africa
- 8—DUTCH MANTEL 224, Oil Trough, MX
- 9—MANNY FERNANDEZ 245, El Paso, TX
- 10—ICEMAN PARSONS 245, St. Louis, MO

WORLD CLASS

World Class Champion: JERRY LAWLER

234, Memphis, TN

- 1—ICEMAN PARSONS 245, St. Louis, MO
- 2—KERRY VON ERICH 260, Denton, TX
- 3—ERIC EMBRY 225, Lexington, KY
- 4—JEFF JARRETT 200, Hendersonville, TN
- 5—SUPER BLACK NINJA 245, Tokyo, Japan
- 6—KEVIN VON ERICH 235, Denton, TX
- 7—BRICKHOUSE BROWN 225, Winter Haven, FL
- 8—STEVE COX
- 240, Portsmouth, VA 9—CACTUS JACK
 - 247, Truth or Consequences, NM
- 10—THE BEAST 375, Botswana

OFFICIAL RATINGS

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. Most Popular and Most Hated ratings are based on nationwide telephone and arena surveys of wrestling fans and on the volume and character of mail that comes to our offices. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings.

AOST POPULAR

- 1 HULK HOGAN 302, Venice Beach, CA Last month: No. 1 Most Popular
- 2 RANDY SAVAGE 245, Sarasota, FL Last month: No. 2 Most Popular
- 35TING 260, Venice Beach, CA Last month: No. 3 Most Popular
- THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR

 280, Queens, NY
 Last month: No. 6 Most Popular
- 5 LEX LUGER 268, Chicago, IL Last month: No. 5 Most Popular
- 6 RICK STEINER
 248, Detroit, MI
 Last month: No. 7 Most Popular
- 7 DUSTY RHODES 302, Austin, TX Last month: No. 8 Most Popular
- SJAKE ROBERTS
 246, Stone Mountain, GA
 Last month: No. 10 Most Popular
- 9HACKSAW DUGGAN 280, Glens Falls, NY Last month: No. 4 Most Popular
- OKERRY VON ERICH
 260, Denton, TX
 Last month: No. 9 Most Popular

MOST HATED

- 1 BIG BOSSMAN
 348, Cobb County, GA
 Last month: No. 1 Most Hated
- 2RIC FLAIR
 243, Minneapolis, MN
 Last month: No. 3 Most Hated
- 3BARRY WINDHAM 263, Sweetwater, TX Last month: No. 4 Most Hated
- 4 ANDRE THE GIANT
 497, Grenoble, France
 Last month: No. 2 Most Hated
- 5 RICK RUDE 246, Robbinsdale, MN Last month: No. 5 Most Hated
- 6BAD NEWS BROWN
 280, New York, NY
 Last month: unrated
- 7 MIKE ROTUNDO 245, Syracuse, NY Last month: unrated
- 8 ROBERT FULLER 238, Dyresburg, TN Last month: unrated
- 9ICEMAN PARSONS 245, St. Louis, MO Last month: unrated
- 10STEVE WILLIAMS
 265, Norman, OK
 Last month: No. 8 Most Hated

For period ended January 1, 1989

CUMULATIVE RATINGS

These ratings are based on the past 10 issues of this magazine. We have examined our ratings for each of those issues—in our Top 10 and Tag Team categories only—and assigned each position a point value: 10 points for a number-one rating, nine for a number-two ranking, and so on down to one point for a number-10 rating. The point values for all wrestlers in the past 10 issues have been compiled, allowing a maximum of 100 points. Each issue we'll present the top five finishers in each category. While our regular ratings reflect the past month, these cumulative ratings give an indication of wider trends in the sport.

SINGLES

1-RANDY SAVAGE96	points
2-RIC FLAIR93	points
3-JERRY LAWLER65	points
4-LEX LUGER62	points
5-STING48	points

TAG TEAMS

1—THE ROAD WARRIORS89	points
2-DEMOLITION86	1. 1000
3-BOBBY EATON & STAN LANE71	points
4-TULLY BLANCHARD & ARN ANDERSON 56	points
5—THE FANTASTICS53	points

STAMPEDE

North American Champion: DON MURACO

274, Sunset Beach, HI

- 1—JOHNNY SMITH 235, Manchester, England
- 2—MAKHAN SINGH 380, Saginaw, MI
- 3—LANCE IDOL 225, Hollywood, CA
- 4—STEVE DISALVO 298, Boston, MA
- 5—CHRIS BENOIT 218, Edmonton, Alberta
- 6—BRUCE HART 211, Calgary, Alberta
- 7—VULKAN SINGH 300, Billings, MT
- 8—GAMA SINGH 220, Karachi, Pakistan
- 9—STEVE BLACKMAN 250, Pittsburgh, PA
- 10—BEEF WELLINGTON 225, Lloydmaster, Alberta

CWA

CWA Champion: SID VICIOUS

290, parts unknown

- 1—JEFF JARRETT 200, Hendersonville, TN
- 2—BILL DUNDEE 214, Melbourne, Australia
- 3—WENDELL COOLEY 220, Milton, FL
- 4—ROBERT FULLER 255, Dyresburg, TN
- 5—JIMMY GOLDEN 235, Montgomery, AL
- 6—BUDDY LANDELL 236, Los Angeles, CA
- 7—ICEMAN PARSONS 245, St. Louis, MO
- 8—JIM GARVIN 235, Tampa, FL
- 9—DUTCH MANTEL 224, Oil Trough, TX
- 10—BRIAN LEE 242, St. Petersburg, FL

CONTINENTAL

Continental Champion: TOM PRICHARD

220, Houston, TX

- 1—BRAD ARMSTRONG 226, Marietta, GA
- 2—DAN DAVIS 238, Nashville, TN
- 3—BLACK BART 261, Pampa, TX
- 4—THE BULLET 234, parts unknown
- 5—DOUG FURNAS 265, Commerce, OK
- 6—ALAN MARTIN 220, Houston, TX
- 7—TONY ANTHONY 235, Bucksnorth, TN
- 8—MASA CHONO 250, Tokyo, Japan
- 9—JOHNNY RICH 235, Hendersonville, TN
- 10-WILLIE B. HERT 238, El Paso, TX

PNW

Pacific Northwest Champion: TOP GUN

260, parts unknown

- 1—THE GRAPPLER 250, parts unknown
- 2—COL. DeBEERS 248, Cape Town, South Africa
- 3—STEVE DOLL 236, Dallas, TX
- 4—SCOTT PETERSON 242, Dallas, TX
- 5—ABUGHDADIEN 245, Iraq
- 6—MATT BORNE 254, Portland, OR
- 7—BUDDY ROSE 271, Minneapolis, MN
- 8—AL MADRIL 245, Los Angeles, CA
- 9—REX KING 230, Tampa, FL
- 10—KARL STYLES 275, Nashville, TN

RATINGS ANALYSIS

Every month, this column will tell fans how we go about rating more than 135 wrestlers in 12 different categories. It is a behind-the-scenes look at the most important—and respected—ratings system in the sport. This column is vital reading for all wrestling fans.

Tracking Trends. Who's moving up, who's moving down, who's moving in, and who's moving out in our ratings . . . and why? That's the purpose of Tracking Trends, a new monthly feature in "Ratings Analysis." In this space, we'll take an in-depth look at specific movements in the ratings (although we won't analyze every wrestler rated).



Andre the Giant

Because this is the first month of Tracking Trends, we'll go a little more in-depth than we will in future issues, where we'll concentrate on only the big or important moves.

The big move this month concerns Andre the Giant, who drops out of the Top 10 ratings. Read "Giant Failure! It's All Over for Andre" (page 38) for a more indepth explanation. Andre was unable to win the WWF World title from-Randy Savage in a long series of matches, and has been reduced to a feud against non-contender Jake Roberts.

U.S champ Barry Windham continues to impress in his numerous title defenses and managed to hold off the challenge of Bam Bam Bigelow at Starrcade. Windham moved up two spots in the Top 10 ratings to number four . . . As signs of an impending Savage-Hulk Hogan feud appear, the revitalized and determined Hogan moves up in the ratings from number eight to number six. Look for his continued rise in coming months . . . Kerry Von Erich lost his World Class title to Jerry Lawler at SuperClash III and drops four spots to number nine . . . Bad News Brown was finally granted a series of matches against Savage and debuts at number 10 in the Top 10.

Steve Williams and Kevin Sullivan formed a tag team duo, won the U.S. belts from The Fantastics, and make their first tag team ratings appearance at an impressive number five ... CWA tag champs Robert Fuller and Jimmy Golden are a new entry at number 10 ... The British Bulldogs won the Stampede International tag belts and move in at number nine, but don't expect them to move up unless their quality of opposition rises ... Warlord and Barbarian will have to win the WWF tag belts shortly if they're to remain at number six.

How does a man win a title and drop in the ratings? Rick Steiner won the TV belt from Mike Rotundo but drops three spots to number six in the NWA ratings. Now that he's champ, Steiner most likely will not get frequent shots at NWA World champ Ric Flair while defending the belt. Therefore, Sting, Eddie Gilbert, and Bam Bam Bigelow all passed him by ... Williams won the U.S. tag title with Sullivan and will wrestle less in singles matches; he drops two spots to number 10 ... Junkyard Dog won the first Bunkhouse Stampede and debuts at number eight. This is quite a jump for JYD, who wasn't rated in the WWF since he was number 10 in The Wrestler's January 1988 issue.

Bad News Brown is now the number-two contender for Savage's

WWF World title and jumps three spots to number two in the WWF ratings ... King Haku was pinned by Savage in early December; it looks like his assault on the WWF title has been stopped. He drops three spots to number nine ... Curt Hennig moves in at number 10, while Hercules drops out.

Greg Gagne won the TV title from Ronnie Garvin at SuperClash III and takes over the number-one spot in the AWA ratings. Garvin, meanwhile, has signed with the WWF... Sgt. Slaughter's victory over Col. DeBeers at SuperClash was certainly painful, but it earned him a big rise in the ratings. He moves up three spots to number four ... The Iron Sheik has invaded the AWA and debuts at number five ...



Brickhouse Brown

Dutch Mantel received a couple of shots at Lawler's AWA title and moves in at number eight ... Manny Fernandez lost to Wahoo McDaniel at SuperClash and drops three spots to number nine.

A few changes in World Class: Brickhouse Brown is after Iceman Parsons' Texas title and moves in at number seven, Michael Hayes has left the area and drops out, and Cactus Jack recently came to World Class and takes over the number-nine position.

Don Muraco is the new Stampede North American champ ... Sid Vicious is the new CWA champ; former champ Brian Lee

has received few rematches and drops all the way to number 10 ... Wendell Cooley is making an impact on the singles scene and moves up four spots to number three ... Brad Armstrong earned a shot at Continental champ Tom Prichard by winning "The Wheel of Fortune" and is now the number-one contender, up four spots from last month ... Biggest move of the month in the CWF: Continental junior heavyweight champ Dan Davis up seven spots to number two ... Alan Martin is now in line for a shot at Davis and debuts at number six.

Randy Savage is now tops in the singles cumulative ratings; The Road Warriors are number one in the tag team cumulative ratings. If Savage and the Warriors retain their belts, they'll lengthen their lead.

The poop on Portland. Pacific Northwest Wrestling, this month's entry in the revolving ratings, is not as well known as many other federations, but presents some of the finest wrestling in the country. Top Gun is the champion and Col. DeBeers recently invaded the area. Other top stars include veterans The Grappler, Buddy Rose, and Al Madril.

That's all, folks. But we'd love to hear what you think about "Tracking Trends," and anything else that might be on your mind—ratings related, of course. Send your comments to: "Ratings Analysis," c/o The Wrestler; Box 48; Rockville Centre, NY 11571.



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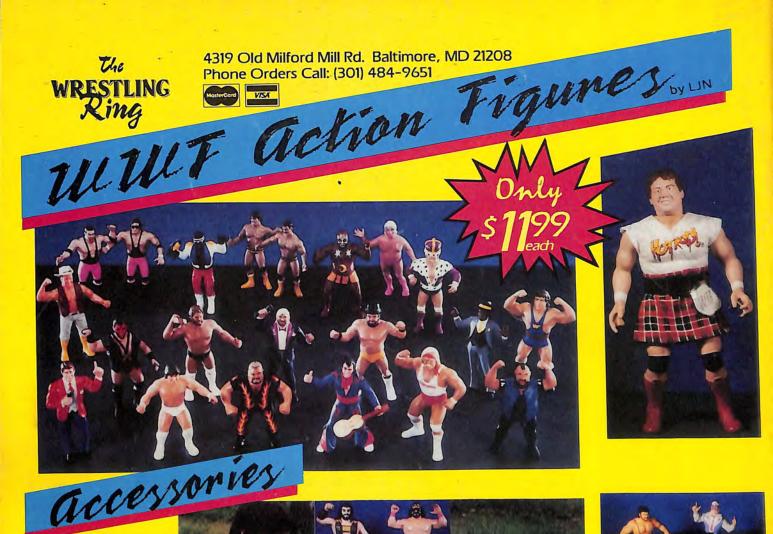
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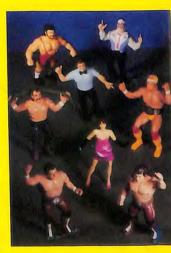


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